

Chapter VII

Environment

In 1997, efforts continued towards improving the state of the environment, particularly through legally binding instruments and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), which pursued the implementation of the environmental dimension of Agenda 21, a comprehensive plan of action adopted in 1992 for the sustainable development of the Earth into the twenty-first century.

During the year, UNEP presented the first report in the Global Environment Outlook series, which stated that, despite progress on several fronts, the environment had continued to degrade during the previous decade and environmental problems remained deeply embedded in the socio-economic fabric of nations in all regions.

The Conference of the Parties to the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Kyoto, Japan, December) adopted the Kyoto Protocol, which aimed to reduce industrialized countries' collective emissions of carbon dioxide and five other greenhouse gases.

Parties to the 1987 Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer agreed, in September, on a phase-out schedule for methyl bromide, a fumigant and an ozone-depleting substance.

The UNEP Governing Council asked the Executive Director to convene a diplomatic conference to adopt and sign an international legally binding instrument for international action to reduce/eliminate the release of persistent organic pollutants, to be concluded preferably by 2000.

Progress was made at the third session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (Geneva, May) towards the adoption of an International Legally Binding Instrument for the Application of the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals in International Trade.

The Economic and Social Council, in July, established the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests under the aegis of the Commission on Sustainable Development to work towards a legally binding instrument on the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests. The Forum held its first meeting in October. The Council also took action towards

the eventual proclamation of an international year of mountains.

The first meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the 1994 United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, decided to accept the offer of Germany to host the permanent secretariat in Bonn and selected the International Fund for Agricultural Development to house the global mechanism.

The UNEP Governing Council held its nineteenth session (January/February and April) at which it adopted decisions relating to, among other matters, the Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of UNEP; UNEP's contribution to the General Assembly's 1997 special session; biosafety; the report on the Global Environment Outlook; chemicals management; water management; UNEP efforts to implement the 1994 United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa; and the UNEP governing structures.

The General Assembly elected Klaus Töpfer (Germany) as the new UNEP Executive Director for a four-year term effective 1 February 1998.

UN Environment Programme

The Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) held its nineteenth session in Nairobi, Kenya, from 27 January to 7 February and on 3 and 4 April [A/52/25]. The resumed session was held to complete consideration of the item on UNEP governing structures. Also at the resumed session, the Council decided that its twentieth session would take place from 24 to 28 May 1999. The Council established the composition of the High-level Committee of Ministers and Officials and decided that the dates of its special session to review the results of the General Assembly's special session on implementation of Agenda 21, adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992 [YUN1992,p.672], would be held between late 1997

and the end of January 1998. The Assembly took note of the Governing Council's report by **decision** 52/441 of 18 December.

The Economic and Social Council, by **decision** 1997/308 of 25 July, took note of an extract [E/1997/L.25] from the Governing Council's report, which dealt with the date and venue of the Council's twentieth session; the Council's special session on Agenda 21; the Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of UNEP; UNEP's contribution to the Assembly's 1997 special session; the report on the Global Environment Outlook; environmental housekeeping practices and guidelines in UNEP and the UN system; chemicals management; water management; UNEP efforts to implement the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa [YUN 1994, p. 944]; and the UNEP governing structures. These and other matters are discussed below.

Nairobi Declaration on UNEP role

The ministers and heads of delegation attending the Council's session, on 7 February, adopted the Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme [A/52/25 (dec. 19/1)], which declared UNEP the principal UN body concerned with the environment and the leading global environmental authority. The Declaration stated that the core elements of the mandate of the revitalized UNEP should be: to analyse the state of the global environment and assess global and regional environmental trends, provide policy advice and early warning information on environmental threats, and catalyse and promote international cooperation and action; to further the development of its international environmental law aiming at sustainable development; to advance the implementation of agreed international norms and policies, monitor and foster compliance with environmental principles and international agreements and stimulate cooperative action to respond to emerging environmental challenges; to strengthen its role in coordinating environmental activities in the UN system, as well as its role as an implementing agency of the Global Environment Facility; to promote greater awareness and facilitate cooperation, and to serve as a link between the scientific community and policy makers; and to provide policy and advisory services in key areas of institution-building to Governments and other relevant institutions. By the Declaration, the ministers and heads of delegation decided to improve the UNEP governing structure and proposed that UNEP should serve as the world forum for the ministers and highest-level government officials in charge of environ-

mental matters. The Declaration reaffirmed the importance of the Environment Fund as the principal source of financing for implementing the UNEP programme. The President of the Governing Council was asked to present the Declaration to the high-level segment of the April session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and to the special session of the General Assembly convened to review and appraise the implementation of Agenda 21 (see PART THREE, Chapter I).

Governing structure

At its resumed session on 4 April, the Governing Council decided [A/52/25 (dec. 19/32)] to establish a High-level Committee of Ministers and Officials as a subsidiary organ to consider the international environmental agenda and to make reform and policy recommendations to the Council; to provide guidance to the Executive Director on emerging environmental issues between Council sessions; to enhance the collaboration and cooperation of UNEP with other multilateral bodies as well as with the environmental conventions and their secretariats; and to support the Executive Director in mobilizing financial resources. The 36 members of the High-level Committee were to be elected by the Council for a two-year period. The Committee was to meet at least once a year. The Council President and the Chairman of the Committee of Permanent Representatives would be invited to meetings, which were open to the European Community (EC) and other intergovernmental economic organizations.

With a view to strengthening the Committee of Permanent Representatives as a subsidiary organ of the Governing Council, the Council decided that the Committee's mandate would be to review, monitor and assess the implementation of the Council's decisions on administrative, budgetary and programme matters; review the draft programme of work and budget; review reports requested of the secretariat by the Council on the effectiveness, efficiency and transparency of the functions and work of the secretariat and make recommendations thereon; and prepare draft decisions for consideration by the Council based on inputs from the secretariat and on the results of the functions specified above. The Committee would comprise representatives of UN Member States and members of its specialized agencies, and EC. It would hold four regular meetings a year, and extraordinary meetings might also be convened. The Committee could establish subcommittees, working groups and task forces in order to carry out its mandate.

The High-level Committee of Ministers and Officials and the Committee of Permanent Representatives were accountable to the Governing

Council and would submit reports on their work at each Council session. The budget for the two Committees would be allocated by the Governing Council. UN Members and members of its specialized agencies were invited to provide financial assistance to facilitate the participation of developing countries, particularly the least developed, and countries with economies in transition, and to establish a trust fund to that end. The Governing Council would review the effectiveness of the governance structure at its twenty-first (2001) session.

General Assembly issues

The Executive Director provided information on issues arising from resolutions adopted by the General Assembly in 1995 and 1996, which called for action by UNEP [UNEP/GC.19/2 & Add.1 & Corr.1].

On 7 February [A/52/25 (dec. 19/11)], the Governing Council took note of the Executive Director's report.

Special session

The General Assembly, at its nineteenth special session (New York, 23-28 June), reviewed and appraised the implementation of Agenda 21—a plan of action for the sustainable development of the Earth into the twenty-first century—adopted at UNCED in 1992 [YUN 1992, p. 672]. The Assembly adopted the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and made a commitment to ensure that its next review in 2002 would demonstrate greater progress in achieving sustainable development (see PART THREE, Chapter I).

Prior to the special session, the UNEP Governing Council, on 7 February [A/52/25 (dec. 19/2)], asked the Executive Director, in accordance with Assembly resolution 51/181 [YUN 1996, p. 740] and on behalf of the Council, to submit to the Commission on Sustainable Development in April, the meeting of its Ad Hoc Open-ended Inter-Sessional Working Group in February/March and the Assembly's special session documents on the implementation by UNEP of Agenda 21, the Council's contribution to the special session [UNEP/GC.19/30 & UNEP/GC.19/INF.13], the report on the Global Environment Outlook, the observations and recommendations regarding the Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law for the 1990s [UNEP/GC.19/32] and the Council's decision on the environmental law programme [dec. 19/20]. It also asked her to present the Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of UNEP [dec. 19/1] to the high-level segment of the Commission on Sustainable Development and to the special session.

On the same date [dec. 19/5], the Council, taking note of the Executive Director's report on the estimated costs for UNEP to implement those parts of Agenda 21 [UNEP/GC.19/22] specifically recommended for its attention [UNEP/GC.19/20], took into account the gap between the current level of resources being provided to UNEP and the levels that the report had calculated.

Cooperation and coordination

UN system

The Governing Council, on 7 February [A/52/25 (dec. 19/9 A)], taking note of a report of the Executive Director on the Inter-Agency Environment Coordination Group (IAEG) [UNEP/GC.19/17], a consultative and advisory body set up to assist the Executive Director in coordinating the activities of the UN system in addressing the major challenges in the UNEP 1996-1997 work programme, asked the Executive Director to report in 1999 on progress made in IAEG's work.

On the same date [dec. 19/9 B], the Council, welcoming a note by the Executive Director on the UN system-wide strategy in the field of the environment [UNEP/GC.19/19], endorsed the Executive Director's view that the strategy should have a flexible structure over the medium term and should be regularly updated given the developments taking place in intergovernmental forums. The Council asked the Executive Director, in consultation with relevant UN organizations, to develop further the strategy through IAEG, following the Assembly's special session, and to provide in 1999 the final strategy document.

Following consideration of the Executive Director's report on cooperation between UNEP and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS) [UNEP/GC.19/8], the Council, on 7 February [dec. 19/9 D], asked her to continue cooperation between the two bodies, particularly through the inter-agency Sustainable Cities Programme. It encouraged UNEP to collaborate in facilitating the implementation of the environmental components of the UNCHS agenda (see also PART THREE, Chapter VIII).

Regarding improving the international response to environmental emergencies, the Council, on 7 February [dec. 19/9 E], having taken note of the Executive Director's report on the subject [UNEP/GC.19/14], expressed satisfaction with the continued collaboration between UNEP and the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) in enhancing the ability of the United Nations to respond to environmental emergencies. It invited Governments and relevant UN organizations and specialized agencies to continue to cooperate with the Joint UNEP/DHA Environment Unit in its ef-

forts to assist countries, particularly developing countries, facing environmental emergencies. The Joint Unit was asked to develop its activities further in accordance with the recommendations of the Advisory Group on Environmental Emergencies, which was established to bring together national experts and focal points. Governments and international organizations were urged to contribute to the Trust Fund for Environmental Emergencies.

In March, UNEP and the United Nations Children's Fund signed a Memorandum of Understanding aimed at strengthening cooperation between the two programmes in areas fundamental to attaining sustainable development. The agreement was designed to address issues connecting the human and physical environment and the health and well-being of the world's children.

On 7 February [dec. 19/6], the Council, having considered the Executive Director's report on emerging issues on the environment and trade agenda [UNEP/GC.19/27], called on her to promote efforts to clarify and assess the environmental effects of trade and trade policies, as well as the effects of environmental policies on trade; to contribute to efforts towards a synergy between environment and trade objectives in policy development and implementation; to cooperate with other international organizations dealing with the relationship between the environment and trade, particularly the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD); and to contribute to efforts to promote and facilitate environmentally responsible investments. Governments were called on to develop mutually supportive trade and environment policies.

In July, UNCTAD and UNEP signed a Memorandum of Understanding on a technical assistance programme for promoting the complementarity of trade, environment and development objectives in developing countries. Under the programme, UNCTAD and UNEP would develop policy options for Governments of developing countries to consider when seeking to integrate environmental considerations in their macroeconomic policies, including trade policies. They would also propose policy instruments and mechanisms, including technology transfer, market access, finance and capacity-building, to facilitate the internalization of environmental costs.

The Council, on 7 February [dec. 19/18], urged the Executive Director to take measures to implement the 1994 Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States [YUN 1994, p. 783] and asked her to report in 1999 on steps taken.

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) was established in 1991 as a joint programme of the United Nations Development Programme, UNEP and the World Bank [YUN 1991, p. 505] to help solve global environment problems. As to UNEP participation in the work of GEF, the Council, on 7 February [dec. 19/12], having considered the Executive Director's report on the subject [UNEP/GC.19/16], urged her to continue to strengthen the links between UNEP and GEF.

Taking note of the Executive Director's progress report on good environmental housekeeping practices and guidelines in UNEP and the UN system [UNEP/GC.19/28], the Council, on 7 February [dec. 19/10], encouraged her to continue her initiatives in that area and asked her to communicate with the UN Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management to urge the adoption of good environmental housekeeping practices throughout the UN system.

Convention secretariats

Following consideration of the Executive Director's report on the coordination of convention secretariats [UNEP/GC.19/11] and the report of the Sixth Meeting on Coordination of Secretariats of Environmental Conventions [UNEP/GC.19/INF.27], the Council, on 7 February [dec. 19/9 C], asked the conferences of parties to the relevant conventions to encourage their secretariats to continue to participate in the coordination process. The Executive Director was urged to continue to promote synergy among the work and activities of environmental agreements and their secretariats and with the UNEP work programme. The Council encouraged her and the secretariat of each convention for which UNEP was responsible to enter into an arrangement that clarified their respective roles and responsibilities. The Executive Director was asked to report in 1999 on steps taken to implement the Council's decision.

Regional and subregional support

In a 7 February decision [dec. 19/31], the Governing Council asked the Executive Director to strengthen UNEP regional offices by providing them with functional and administrative capabilities to enable decentralized implementation of regional environmental programmes and priorities, as developed by regional and subregional ministerial meetings. Governments were invited to increase their participation in their respective regional cooperation programmes on the environment and were urged to participate more actively in the programmes.

On the same date [dec. 19/19], the Council asked the Executive Director to support the Framework

for the North-East Asian Subregional Programme of Environmental Cooperation by providing technical support to the Fourth Meeting of Senior Officials on Environmental Cooperation in North-East Asia (Moscow, August/September) and technical and financial support to the priority project proposals under the Framework. It also asked her to assist the countries of the subregion in mobilizing GEF resources for the priority project proposals under the Framework.

Environmental assessment

In 1997, UNEP presented the first report in the Global Environment Outlook series (GEO-1), which provided information on the state of the global environment. GEO-1 stated that, despite progress on several fronts, the global environment had continued to degrade during the previous decade and significant environmental problems remained deeply embedded in the socio-economic fabric of nations in all regions.

The Governing Council considered a report of the Executive Director [UNEP/GC.19/26] on GEO-1. She stated that UNEP had identified 20 internationally renowned environmental institutions as GEO collaborating centres, and instituted a mechanism for regional consultations, four scientific working groups and UN agency participation through the UN system-wide Earthwatch.

On 7 February [dec. 19/3], the Council approved the continuation of the GEO process and the production of the biennial GEO reports. It asked the Executive Director to submit the next report in the series in 1999; to consult with interested Governments on the framework for future GEO reports; to improve the consultative process for preparing the reports; and to include in the next report data gaps that could not be filled from existing sources, including collaborating centres of environmental assessment excellence.

On the same date [dec. 19/4], the Council asked the Executive Director to improve the use of the Global Environment Monitoring System (GEMS)/Air and GEMS/Water programmes and the Global Resource Information Database in the preparation of the GEO assessments. It urged her to try to secure adequate funds for the 1997 and 1998-1999 budgets of the GEMS programme and the Database.

Telecommunications

The Governing Council considered a report of the Executive Director on the status of implementation of the Mercure satellite communications system [UNEP/GC.19/21]. She stated that the final step towards full operation had been stalled by a delay in receiving the requisite authorization

from the International Telecommunications Satellite Organization (INTELSAT) for UNEP central earth stations to start using satellite capacity. In the meantime, planning by UNEP was well advanced for the enhanced utilization of Internet mechanisms for environmental information access and exchange, which were broadly grouped under the "UNEPnet" system.

The Council, on 7 February [dec. 19/30], taking note of the Executive Director's report and of the Supplemental Agreement between Kenya and UNEP regarding the installation and operation of the Mercure satellite telecommunication system ground station within UNEP headquarters, concluded on 31 January, encouraged UNEP to explore the use of the UNEPnet/Mercure system by the United Nations at other sites outside Kenya where technically and economically feasible. It authorized the Executive Director to engage in collaborative programmes with other donors for the continuing development of the UNEPnet/Mercure infrastructure through a collaboration co-funded by UNEP and other donors. The Council asked her to ensure that a full review and cost-benefit analysis of the system and the experience gained in its initial operation were carried out and to submit a report thereon in 1999. The Executive Director was authorized to finance from the budget the continued testing and operation of Mercure.

Women in environment and development

The Council considered a report of the Executive Director [UNEP/GC.19/9] describing action taken by UNEP in support of the Fourth (1995) World Conference on Women [YUN 1995, p. 1169]. She described a number of actions taken to meet the global priorities for the advancement of women by the year 2000 in support of the following objectives contained in the Conference's Platform for Action: involving women actively in environmental decision-making; integrating gender concerns and perspectives in policies and programmes for sustainable development; and strengthening or establishing mechanisms to assess the impact of development and environmental policies on women. The specific commitments by UNEP were to: endeavour to incorporate women's* concerns into UNEP policies, programmes and projects; adjust recruitment policies and create a favourable environment to recruit women; judge managers according to the extent to which they incorporated gender criteria in performance appraisals; ensure that women participated and that gender concerns were reflected in policy development work; give priority to environmental education and training programmes tailored to women's needs; design pro-

grammes to cater to the needs of women who were often the victims of armed conflicts that took place over land and resources; emphasize in law programmes the need to accord women the legal rights to enable them to manage and own land and make decisions on land use; advocate and support respect for the fundamental rights of women to ensure that women contributed their knowledge to the solution of environmental problems; and accord women their rightful role in decision-making at all levels. UNEP produced publications to advance those commitments, contributed to inter-agency discussions and issued 12 awareness-building posters on the major themes of the Conference as they related to the environment. Substantial progress had been made in integrating a gender perspective into the work and activities of UNEP.

Taking note of the Executive Director's report, the Council, on 7 February [dec. 19/7], endorsed the policy framework document *Gender and the Environment: A UNEP Perspective* and other UNEP activities in support of the Conference. It asked UNEP to improve its collection, dissemination and use of gender-disaggregated data related to women and the environment. The Executive Director was urged to continue to implement the specific commitments to meet the global priorities for the advancement of women by the year 2000, given by her at the Conference. She was asked to report to the Commission on the Status of Women (see PART THREE, Chapter X) and the Commission on Sustainable Development (see PART THREE, Chapter I) in 1997 and the Council in 1999.

Administrative matters

Conference servicing

Following consideration of a report of the Executive Director on developments in conference servicing [UNEP/GC.19/5], the Council, on 7 February [dec. 19/27], encouraged her to work closely with the United Nations, the United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON) and UNCHS to ensure that there was a smooth transition to the new arrangement incorporating UNEP conference services into UNON.

Human resources

The Executive Director submitted to the Council a report summarizing efforts made by UNEP to enhance the utilization of human resources while ensuring the complementary and appropriate use of consultancies [UNEP/GC.19/15], which the Council took note of on 7 February [dec. 19/28]. The Council asked her to implement a

1995 decision [YUN 1995, p. 1069] taking into account subsequent reports by UN bodies on the use of consultants by UNEP. It also asked her to continue to report on the issue quarterly to the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

Management issues

In 1997, the Governing Council considered a report of the Board of Auditors [UNEP/GC.19/INF.1] on UNEP accounts for the biennium ended 31 December 1995. The Board recommended corrective actions relating to programme management, financial management, procurement, publications programmes, the appointment of consultants and conference facilities. The Council also examined a report of the Executive Director describing action taken by UNEP to combat waste, fraud and mismanagement [UNEP/GC.19/6 & Add.1], as called for by the Council in 1995 [YUN 1995, p. 1069].

On 7 February [dec. 19/29 A], the Council expressed concern at the extent and nature of the Board's recommendations and, in view of the current financial and management crisis, as reflected in a drop-off in contributions to the Environment Fund, asked the Executive Director to identify and implement improvements in UNEP policies and practices designed to counter waste, fraud and mismanagement, including the appropriate delegation of programme-planning authority to line management, strengthening oversight mechanisms, clarifying financial procedures and incorporating into UNEP reports accurate financial information on income and expenditures. It also asked her to implement further measures that incorporated the recommendations of the Board of Auditors, of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) and the forthcoming reports of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) (see below), and to submit an interim report to Member States within six months and a final report to the Council in 1999. Governments were encouraged to submit comments to the Executive Director prior to the 1999 session.

In other action on management issues, the Secretary-General, in response to General Assembly resolution 48/218 B [YUN 1994, p. 1362], transmitted a February report [A/51/810] by the Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services concerning a review of UNEP and the administrative practices of its secretariat, including UNON. The report stated that in general the UNEP secretariat was not functioning in an environment that facilitated efficiency and effectiveness. The functional responsibilities of departments were not clear, and there seemed to be no clear delegation of authority. There was an exces-

sive use of consultants and advisers, with little indication of the value of their services, and the establishment of higher-grade posts, resulting in a top-heavy secretariat. The problems had been aggravated by the limited ability of the newly established UNON to provide common services in support of UNEP.

Recommendations by OIOS included defining the role and function of senior management; translating UNEP's role as a catalyst, coordinator and stimulator of environmental action into a single programme budget document; strengthening the Environmental Economics Unit; re-evaluating the relationship between the secretariats of the environmental conventions and UNEP; managerial assessment of the organizational structure to reduce its top-heaviness, delineate the functions of each unit, avoid a too-thin distribution of resources and reflect clear lines of authority; streamlining programme and administrative committees; appointing a second-in-command to the Executive Director; creating an independent evaluation office; resolving issues of compatibility between the UN and UNEP systems, in particular the issue of the Mercure telecommunications facility; reviewing the dispersal of financial authorization to ensure financial coherence; re-evaluating the appointment and promotion machinery; and putting UNON on the right track through the appropriate delegation of authority, staff enhancement through training and a stable resource base.

By **decision 51/468 F** of 13 June, the General Assembly took note of the OIOS report and noted that it would be considered by the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) in 1997.

CPC consideration. At its thirty-seventh session (9 June–3 July) [A/52/16], CPC took note of the OIOS report and looked forward to the full implementation of its recommendations in accordance with UNEP Governing Council decisions.

UNEP Fund

Following consideration of the Executive Director's report on the status of the Environment Fund covering the use of resources in the 1994-1995 biennium, the revised use of resources in the 1996-1997 biennium and the proposed use of projected resources in the 1998-1999 biennium [UNEP/GC.19/22 & Corr.1], the Governing Council, on 7 February [A/52/25 (dec. 19/22)], approved the revised appropriation of Fund resources in 1996-1997 of \$33,861,400 for the management and administrative support costs budget and \$63.5 million for Fund programme activities. It also approved an appropriation of Fund resources in 1998-1999 of \$27.5 million for the

management and administrative support costs budget, \$75 million for Fund programme activities and \$5 million for the Fund programme reserve. An extraordinary additional amount of Fund resources in 1998-1999 of up to \$1 million for the management and administrative support costs budget was approved as follows: \$500,000 for an evaluation of UNEP management and administrative support and other activities related to improved management practices by UNEP; and \$500,000 for the costs of the anticipated special session of the Council if those costs were not covered by the UN regular budget. The Council noted with concern that the overall low level of contributions to the Fund for 1996-1997 had fallen short of estimates by a significant margin and would not enable the 1996-1997 programme of activities to be fully implemented. The Executive Director was asked to provide up-to-date statements on all other sources of funding available to UNEP.

Regarding the management and administrative support costs budget, the Council approved changes in the provision of the costs to UNON Conference Services in 1997, as proposed in the Executive Director's report on developments in conference servicing [UNEP/GC.19/5]. It also approved a revised appropriation of \$33,861,400 for the management and administrative support costs budget for 1996-1997. The Executive Director was asked to investigate steps for further savings in the 1997 support costs budget and to take steps for further reductions in 1998-1999. The Council confirmed personnel changes. It approved the revised format and structure of the management and administrative support costs budget as set out in the proposed 1998-1999 budget; an appropriation of \$27.5 million for the 1998-1999 management and administrative support costs budget; and the annual payment of the UNEP contribution to UNON as a lump sum.

As to Fund programme activities, the Council, noting with concern the need to reduce the programme of activities it had adopted in 1995 [YUN 1995, p. 1064] owing to the shortfall in contributions to the Fund, approved the revised appropriation for 1996-1997 Fund programme activities of \$63.5 million. It further approved an appropriation of \$75 million for 1998-1999 activities. The Executive Director was asked to maintain the multilateral functions of the Regional Office for North America and the Regional Office for Europe and, in consultation with OIOS, to evaluate the role, functions and management of all UNEP regional offices. She was also asked to ensure that projects and activities deferred or deleted from the 1996-1997 work programme were covered in 1998-1999.

In another decision of 7 February [dec. 19/23], the Council, expressing concern at the serious erosion of UNEP's resource base of voluntary contributions to the Fund and its predictability, asked the Executive Director to explore, in consultation with Governments, ways to secure a stable, adequate and predictable funding for UNEP in the future, and to report thereon in 1999.

By another decision [dec. 19/26], the Council took note of ACABQ's observations on the report of the Board of Auditors on the Fund's 1994-1995 financial report and audited financial statements [A/51/533] and of the Executive Director's comments thereon [UNEP/GC.19/33]. It asked the Executive Director to implement the functions within UNEP's purview recommended for corrective action, before the end of the 1996-1997 biennium, and to report on the results in 1999.

Trust funds

On 7 February [dec. 19/24 A], the Council approved the establishment of 10 trust funds for specific activities and extended six others. It approved the extension of a further 22 trust funds subject to UNEP receiving requests to do so from the relevant Governments or contracting parties.

Taking note of the Executive Director's report on the cost of administering trust funds [UNEP/GC.19/18], the Council, on 7 February [dec. 19/24 B], asked her to identify the full administrative and management costs incurred by the individual trust funds and UNEP. She was also asked: to issue a summary report including a description of the major activities carried out by the programmatic trust funds, indicating also the infrastructure required by UNEP to manage and administer the funds; to provide the Governing Council biannually with a list of each fund's donors and the amounts that they contributed; to provide information on UNEP and UNON activities related to the programming, administration and management of funds; and to ensure the expeditious servicing of all programmatic units covered by trust funds. The Council decided to hold a full discussion in 1999 on the roles of the Executive Director and the Council.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 17 June [meeting 102], the General Assembly adopted **resolution 51/238** without vote [agenda item 97 (a)].

Use of the Special Voluntary Fund and the Trust Fund established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 47/188

The General Assembly,

Recalling paragraph 15 of its resolution 47/188 of 22 December 1992 relating to a special voluntary fund to assist developing countries affected by desertification

and drought, in particular the least developed countries, to participate fully and effectively in the negotiation process of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa,

Recalling also paragraph 13 of its resolution 47/188 and paragraph 8 of resolution 50/112 of 20 December 1995 relating to the possibility of using the Trust Fund to support the participation of representatives of non-governmental organizations in the work of the Committee,

Recalling further paragraph 13 (b) of its resolution 51/180 of 16 December 1996 concerning the maintenance of arrangements relating to extrabudgetary funds,

Noting with pleasure the entry into force on 26 December 1996 of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa,

1. Decides that the head of the interim secretariat, under the authority of the Secretary-General, shall have the possibility of using the Special Voluntary Fund, as appropriate, to assist developing countries affected by desertification and drought, in particular the least developed countries, to participate fully and effectively in the first session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention;

2. Decides also that the head of the interim secretariat, under the authority of the Secretary-General, shall have the possibility of using the Trust Fund, as appropriate, to support the participation of representatives of non-governmental organizations in the work of the first session of the Conference of the Parties.

Financial rules

In a 7 February decision [dec. 19/25], the Governing Council, taking note of the Executive Director's report containing proposals for a revision of the Financial Rules of the UNEP Fund and of the General Procedures Governing the Operations of the Fund [UNEP/GC.19/3], approved a series of revisions to the Rules and to the General Procedures. It asked the Executive Director to consult UN financial authorities and other related UN programmes and agencies on the comprehensive review of the financial rules of UNEP and to report thereon in 1999.

General aspects

UNCED follow-up

During the year, follow-up action to the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) [YUN 1992, p. 670] was taken by the General Assembly, which held a special session to review and appraise the implementa-

don of Agenda 21—a plan of action for the sustainable development of the Earth into the twenty-first century—adopted by UNCED (see PART THREE, Chapter I), and by the Commission on Sustainable Development (see reports of the Secretary-General below in this section and under "Environmental activities").

The special session of the Assembly adopted the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 (**resolution S-19/2**), which included a statement of commitment to Agenda 21 and to the goals of sustainable development at all levels. In other action, the Assembly's Second (Economic and Financial) Committee discussed matters relating to the implementation of UNCED decisions and recommendations. On 18 December, the Assembly, by **decision 52/442**, took note of part two of the Committee's report on those matters [A/52/629/Add.1].

Rio Declaration

The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, adopted in 1992 at UNCED, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil [YUN 1992, p. 670], aimed to establish a new and equitable global partnership on environment and development through cooperation among States, key sectors of society and individuals.

In response to General Assembly resolution 51/181 [YUN 1996, p. 740], the Secretary-General submitted a February report, indicating the status of incorporation of the Declaration's 27 principles into national and international law [E/CN.17/1997/8] during the period 1992-1996. He stated that some of the principles appeared in global or regionally binding instruments, while others could be identified only in soft-law instruments. The report mainly focused on the international instruments adopted at UNCED and on major conventions adopted or having entered into force since then. Besides binding instruments, many of the principles of the Rio Declaration were included in instruments adopted at major intergovernmental conferences. The Secretary-General noted that considerable progress in implementing certain principles had been achieved.

Environment and sustainable development

The Commission on Sustainable Development (fifth session, New York, 7-25 April) considered a January report of the Secretary-General on integrating socio-economic and environmental concerns in decision-making [E/CN.17/1997/2/Add.7]. He addressed three areas: the development of in-

tegrated and participatory strategies for sustainable development at the national level, where progress had been mixed since UNCED, with further steps needed to realize their full potential; development and use of specific policy-making tools and instruments that helped to integrate environment and development in decision-making, including environmental impact assessment and indicators; and development and application of integrated environmental and economic accounting, where some progress had been made at the international level but much work remained to be done at the national level.

The most significant area of success with strategies and plans was at the city and municipal level, where local Agenda 21 initiatives had flourished. A substantial number of countries had established national-level commissions or coordinating mechanisms designed to develop an integrated approach to sustainable development and to include a wide range of civil society sectors in the process of agenda-setting and strategy-building. In addition, there had been an increase in initiatives to formulate regional strategies of sustainable development and action plans to establish mechanisms for regional cooperation in implementing the initiatives. An area of promising change related to the increased use by Governments, the private sector and other major groups of integrative decision-making tools expressed as economic and policy instruments that aided the process of integrating environment and development in decision-making.

In spite of positive developments, there had been slow progress in developing a system for environmental and economic accounting at the national level. There was also a need to clarify the definition, purposes and methods for national sustainable development strategies and to bring some consistency of practice to the different requirements that countries were to satisfy with respect to environmental action plans, national development plans and country strategy papers. Clarification was needed on how the outcomes of different international conferences and their calls for action could be integrated into national planning and overall action for sustainable development.

On 18 December, by **decision 52/440**, the General Assembly took note of part one of the Second Committee's report relating to environment and sustainable development [A/52/629].

On the same date, the Assembly, by **decision 52/445**, decided to continue to review the progress made in implementing the conventions signed at UNCED, as well as other conventions related to sustainable development, and asked the Secretary-General to sub-

mit a report in 1998 on ways of carrying out the review. It invited, beginning in the year 2000, the conferences of the parties to the conventions signed at UNCED or established as a result of the Conference, as well as other conventions relating to sustainable development, to take measures to avoid convening their sessions during Assembly sessions.

International conventions and mechanisms

On 7 February [A/52/25 (dec. 19/21)], the UNEP Governing Council, taking note of the report of the Executive Director on international conventions and protocols relating to the environment [UNEP/GC.19/31], called on States that had not signed, ratified or acceded to the conventions and protocols to which they were eligible to become parties to do so. It called on States and organizations to provide UNEP with information on new conventions and protocols as well as information on any changes to the status of existing ones. The Executive Director was asked to present updated information in 1999.

Climate change convention

In 1997, seven States (Burundi, Cyprus, Singapore, South Africa, Suriname, Ukraine, Yugoslavia) ratified the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which was opened for signature in 1992 [YUN 1992, p. 681] and entered into force in 1994 [YUN 1994, p. 938], bringing the total number of parties to 171 as at 31 December. The Convention committed the industrialized countries to take the lead in limiting and reducing emissions of the greenhouse gases that were causing global warming.

Conference of Parties

The third session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention (Kyoto, Japan, 1-11 December) adopted the Kyoto Protocol to the Convention [FCCC/CP/1997/7 & Add.1]. The Protocol, which would be open for signature for one year from 16 March 1998, aimed to reduce industrialized countries' collective emissions of carbon dioxide and five other greenhouse gases by 5.2 per cent below their 1990 levels during the period from 2008 to 2012. That figure translated into a real reduction of some 20 per cent below the point that emissions would otherwise have reached by 2010, according to projections. Individual national tar-

gets were differentiated to reflect national circumstances. Under the Protocol, an international emissions trading regime would be established to allow industrialized countries to buy and sell emissions credits among themselves. A joint implementation programme would provide credits for financing emissions-avoiding projects in developing and transition countries.

In addition to the environmental benefits, the Protocol would have long-reaching economic impacts. The main means for achieving the Kyoto targets would be domestic action in industrialized countries to improve efficiency in the use of energy, introduce new technologies and influence consumption patterns.

The Conference adopted decisions to promote the implementation of the Convention dealing with, among other things, development of observational networks of the climate system; funding of development and transfer of environmentally sound technologies; and cooperation with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (see below, under "Environmental activities"). It decided to hold its fourth session in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 2 to 13 November 1998.

Subsidiary bodies. The Conference's subsidiary bodies met during the year in Bonn, Germany. The Ad Hoc Group on the Berlin Mandate drew up the draft text for the Kyoto Protocol during its sixth (3-7 March) [FCCC/AGBM/1997/3 & Add.1], seventh (31 July-7 August) [FCCC/AGBM/1997/5] and eighth (22-31 October and 30 November) [FCCC/AGBM/1997/8 & Add.1] sessions.

The Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice held its fifth (25-28 February) [FCCC/SBSTA/1997/4], sixth (28 July-5 August) [FCCC/SBSTA/1997/6] and seventh (20-28 October) [FCCC/SBSTA/1997/14] sessions, which dealt with cooperation with international organizations, methodological issues, mechanisms for consultations with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the development and transfer of technologies and activities implemented jointly.

The Subsidiary Body for Implementation held its fifth (25 February-7 March) [FCCC/SBI/1997/6], sixth (28 July-5 August) [FCCC/SBI/1997/16] and seventh (20-29 October) [FCCC/SBI/1997/21] sessions to discuss national communications, financial and technical cooperation, the development and transfer of technologies, administrative and financial matters, and legal issues.

The Ad Hoc Group on Article 13, at its fourth (25-28 February) [FCCC/AG13/1997/2] and fifth (28-30 July) [FCCC/AG13/1997/4] sessions, considered the establishment of a multilateral consultative process for the resolution of questions regarding implementation (article 13).

Note of Secretary-General. As requested by the General Assembly in resolution 50/115 [YUN 1995, p. 1071], the Secretary-General, in a November note [A/52/667], reported on the result of the review of the arrangements established in 1996 [YUN 1996, p. 953] for providing the Conference of the Parties to the Convention with conference services and the Convention secretariat with administrative services. He stated that the review of administrative arrangements was expected to be finalized in 1998. Regarding conference services, the UN Secretariat intended to continue providing them to the Conference and its subsidiary bodies during the 1998-1999 biennium.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 18 December [meeting 77], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Second Committee [A/52/629/Add.3], adopted **resolution 52/199** without vote [agenda item 98 (c)].

Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 50/115 of 20 December 1995 and 51/184 of 16 December 1996 and other relevant resolutions relating to the protection of the global climate for present and future generations of mankind,

Noting with satisfaction that most States and one regional economic integration organization have ratified or acceded to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,

Expressing its deep appreciation to the Government of Japan for hosting the third session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,

Looking forward to the continued efforts of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies in addressing climate change,

Taking note of the statement of the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change on the results of the meeting of the Conference of the Parties prepared in response to the invitation of the General Assembly as contained in paragraph 6 of resolution 51/184,

Noting with regret that the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolutions 50/115 and 51/184 was not submitted on time,

1. Welcomes the convening of the third session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in Kyoto, Japan, from 1 to 10 December 1997;

2. Calls upon all States to strive for a successful outcome of the Berlin Mandate process;

3. Notes the ongoing process of the review of the administrative arrangements regarding personnel and financial matters established in the context of the transitional arrangement for administrative support to the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change for the biennium 1996-1997, and the arrangements made for the provision of conference services to the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and its subsidiary bodies for the biennium

1996-1997, as requested in paragraph 10 of its resolution 50/115 and paragraph 3 of its resolution 51/184;

4. Decides to maintain the arrangements regarding personnel and financial matters established in regard to the provisions of administrative support to the secretariat of the Convention, for the biennium 1998-1999, taking into account the review of the functioning of the institutional linkage called for in its resolution 50/115, and as reiterated in its resolution 51/184;

5. Also decides to include in the calendar of conferences and meetings for the biennium 1998-1999 the sessions of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies, entailing eight weeks of conference-servicing facilities envisaged for that biennium;

6. Invites the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session and following the outcome of the third session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention;

7. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-third session the sub-item entitled "Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind".

Montreal protocol

At 31 December, 162 States and the European Community (EC) were parties to the 1987 Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer [YUN 1987, p. 686], 116 States and EC were parties to the 1990 Amendment [YUN 1990, p. 522] to the Protocol, and 75 States and EC were parties to the 1992 Amendment [YUN 1992, p. 684].

The Ninth Meeting (Montreal, Canada, 15-17 September) of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol [UNEP/OzL.Pro.9/12] agreed on a phase-out schedule for methyl bromide, a fumigant and an ozone-depleting substance (ODS). The phase-out of methyl bromide by developed countries, previously set at 2010, had been moved up to 2005 with exemptions for critical uses and interim reductions of 25 per cent by 1999, 50 per cent by 2001 and 70 per cent by 2003. Developing countries agreed to a phase-out by 2015. In addition to \$10 million agreed in 1996 for funding demonstration projects testing the feasibility of methyl bromide alternatives, the Multilateral Fund would make \$25 million available annually in 1998 and 1999 for activities to phase out methyl bromide in developing countries. A new licensing system was adopted to prevent the illegal traffic of controlled substances, based on licences issued by parties for each import and export and on regular information exchange between parties. In other action, the Meeting asked parties to discourage the development and promotion of new substances with a significant potential to deplete the ozone layer, technologies to use such substances and use of those substances in various applications.

The Meeting amended the Protocol in areas dealing with banning the export and import of methyl bromide, the control of trade with parties and licensing. The Amendment would enter into force on 1 January 1999, provided that at least 20 instruments of ratification, acceptance or approval had been deposited by parties to the Protocol. The Tenth Meeting of the Parties would be held in November 1998 in Cairo, Egypt.

The Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) reported that, as at December, UNDP was assisting 60 countries to eliminate ODS [DP/1998/17/Add.2]. In 1997, total approvals were \$45.4 million, with 99 per cent funded by the Executive Committee of the Protocol Multilateral Fund and 1 per cent funded through the Global Environment Facility for work in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Thus, the UNDP 1991-1997 cumulative project portfolio increased to \$190 million. The portfolio comprised 730 projects, including 444 technology-transfer conversion projects, which would eliminate 24,226 tonnes per year of ODS. In 1997, UNDP completed 79 projects, thus raising the total number of projects completed during 1991-1997 to 252, including 49 technology-conversion projects that eliminated 3,065 tonnes of ODS yearly and 30 non-investment projects comprising training, technical cooperation, project preparation and demonstration projects. Under the programme, a total of \$35 million was disbursed in 1997. UNDP also had programmes in 27 low-ODS-consuming countries and developed seven innovative approaches to eliminate ODS consumption in small and medium-sized enterprises.

Convention on Biological Diversity

In 1997, seven States became parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, which opened for signature in 1992 [YUN 1992, p. 683] and entered into force in 1993 [YUN 1993, p. 810], bringing the total number of parties to 172.

The objectives of the Convention were the conservation, sustainable use and equitable sharing of the benefits of the use of biological diversity.

The fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties was scheduled to take place in May 1998 in Bratislava, Slovakia.

Commission action. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 51/182 [YUN 1996, p. 957], the Secretary-General, in February [E/CN.17/1997/11], transmitted to the Commission on Sustainable Development the report of the Executive Secretary of the Convention on experience gained under the Convention and on arrange-

ments to coordinate activities related to the Convention's objectives.

The Convention had become a vehicle to implement the concept of sustainable development and the policies of Agenda 21 in the area of biological diversity. Under Agenda 21's social and economic dimensions, the Convention addressed international cooperation to accelerate sustainable development, combating poverty, changing consumption patterns, protecting and promoting health and integrating environment and development in decision-making. In the area of conservation and management of resources for development, it covered the protection of the atmosphere, an integrated approach to the planning and management of land resources, combating deforestation, managing fragile ecosystems, promoting sustainable agriculture and rural development, the environmentally sound management of biotechnology and the protection of the oceans, all kinds of seas, including enclosed and semi-enclosed seas, and coastal areas and the protection, rational use and development of their living resources. As to strengthening the role of major groups, the Convention corresponded to the chapters of Agenda 21 dealing with global action for women towards sustainable and equitable development, strengthening the role of indigenous people and their communities, strengthening the role of farmers and strengthening the role of business and industry.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 18 December [meeting 77], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Second Committee [A/52/629/Add.5], adopted **resolution 52/201** without vote [agenda item 98 (e)].

Convention on Biological Diversity

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 51/182 of 16 December 1996 on the Convention on Biological Diversity and other relevant resolutions relating to the Convention,

Recalling also the provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity,

Recalling further Agenda 21, particularly its chapter 15 on the conservation of biological diversity and related chapters,

Recalling the recommendations made at the third session of the Commission on Sustainable Development on the review of chapter 15 of Agenda 21 on the conservation of biological diversity,

Deeply concerned by the continued loss of the world's biological diversity, and, on the basis of the provisions of the Convention, reaffirming the commitment to the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources,

Emphasizing that the Convention is an important instrument for achieving sustainable development, tak-

ing into account its three objectives, and for promoting the ecosystem approach embodied in the Convention and the decisions of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention,

Encouraged by the work carried out to date under the Convention,

Noting with satisfaction that most States and one regional economic integration organization have ratified or acceded to the Convention,

Taking note with appreciation of the generous offer of the Government of Slovakia to host the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention at Bratislava from 4 to 15 May 1998,

Recalling its invitation to the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity to report to the General Assembly on the results of future meetings of the Conference of the Parties,

1. Welcomes the results of the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, held at Buenos Aires from 4 to 15 November 1996, as reflected in the report of the meeting, submitted in accordance with resolution 51/182, and in that context reaffirms the need to take concrete action to fulfil the three objectives of the Convention;

2. Takes note of the decision of the Conference of the Parties on the conservation and sustainable use of agricultural biological diversity and the programme of work contained therein, and the development of a focused work programme for forest biological diversity;

3. Also takes note of the ongoing work and the international cooperation to date towards fulfilling the objectives of the Convention, the decision of the Conference of the Parties and, *inter alia*, the initiative taken on holding workshops, including the workshop on traditional knowledge and biological diversity, and the important work being carried out by the subsidiary bodies of the Convention;

4. Further takes note of the work carried out at the third meeting of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on Biosafety, held at the seat of the secretariat of the Convention at Montreal, Canada, from 13 to 17 October 1997, and reaffirms the importance of those negotiations for the development of a protocol on biosafety;

5. Encourages those States that have not yet ratified the Convention to do so as soon as possible;

6. Recognizes that States parties to the Convention have agreed to provide additional financial resources for the implementation of the Convention in accordance with article 20 of the Convention, and urges all funding institutions, including bilateral and multilateral donors as well as regional funding institutions and non-governmental organizations, to cooperate with the secretariat of the Convention in implementing the decision of the Conference of the Parties;

7. Renews its appreciation for the important work being carried out under the Convention towards enhancing cooperation with the Commission on Sustainable Development and biodiversity-related conventions;

8. Recognizes the importance of the implementation of the Convention at all levels, including through the preparation and the implementation of national strategies, plans and programmes;

9. Notes that the first national reports by States parties to the Convention, as required under article 26 of the Convention, are due to be submitted to the secretar-

iat of the Convention no later than 1 January 1998 in accordance with the decision taken at the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties, calls upon Member States that are parties to the Convention to meet that requirement as soon as possible, and in that context invites the international community to assist developing countries in fulfilling that commitment;

10. Also notes the clarification of the administrative arrangements regarding the respective roles of the United Nations Environment Programme and the secretariat of the Convention in respect of personnel and financial matters, as detailed in the Administrative Arrangements between the United Nations Environment Programme and the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity signed on 30 June 1997;

11. Calls upon States parties to the Convention to settle urgently any arrears and to pay their contributions in full and in a timely manner, in accordance with the decision of the Conference of the Parties regarding the contributions required for the Trust Fund for the Convention on Biological Diversity, so as to ensure continuity in the cash flow required to finance the ongoing work of the Conference of the Parties, the subsidiary bodies and the Convention secretariat;

12. Invites the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity to report to the General Assembly on the results of future meetings of the Conference of the Parties;

13. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-third session the sub-item entitled "Convention on Biological Diversity".

Convention to combat desertification

As at 31 December, 116 States were parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, which was adopted in 1994 [YUN 1994, p. 944] and entered into force in 1996 [YUN 1996, p. 958]. During the year, 59 States ratified or acceded to the Convention.

Implementation

UNEP action. The Executive Director submitted a report to the Governing Council summarizing progress achieved during 1995 and 1996 towards implementing the Convention, including through the partnership agreement with the UNDP Office to Combat Desertification (UNSO) [UNEP/GC.19/7]. She described UNEP action in desertification control areas, including the assessment of land degradation; improving global awareness of dryland and desertification issues; promoting action in support of the Convention; and improving understanding of the social dimensions of land degradation and promoting sustainable practices of land management. The Executive Director observed that progress had been achieved in 1996, despite being constrained by the lack of resources.

The Governing Council, on 7 February [A/52/25 (dec. 19/17)], taking note of the Executive Director's report, urged States that had not ratified the Convention to do so. It encouraged the Executive Director to: continue to contribute to the implementation of the Convention; invite other UN organizations and agencies, financial institutions, funds and other interested parties to participate in partnership agreements for implementing the Convention in affected developing countries, particularly in Africa; continue to support activities related to capacity-building and coordinating mechanisms; and intensify support for activities in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. Governments were urged to provide the Conference of the Parties with relevant research and up-to-date data on the status of desertification and land degradation for consideration of the Committee on Science and Technology of the Convention. Governments, regional economic integration organizations and other organizations, as well as NGOs, were called on to contribute further to the implementation of the Convention in affected developing countries.

Note by Secretary-General. In October [A/52/526], the Secretary-General reported on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/114 [YUN 1995, p. 1079] on desertification and drought.

Under their 1995 partnership agreement [YUN 1995, p. 1078], UNDP and UNEP were committed to working on sustainable dryland management through the Convention. On the basis of that partnership, UNDP/UNSO and UNEP had collaborated on two joint initiatives, on assessment, monitoring and information systems and on a framework for advocacy. On assessing and monitoring desertification, UNEP and UNSO had collaborated on the development of desertification indicators. A joint initiative on desertification assessment and monitoring was under way. In collaboration with other core partners, UNEP and UNDP/UNSO were designing a plan for advocacy and outreach to facilitate cost-effective and coordinated efforts to increase knowledge and awareness on dryland issues, building partnerships and drawing on the strengths and interests of the partners involved. Financial support to UNDP/UNSO from 1995 to date amounted to \$13.7 million.

The Economic and Social Council, on 7 February, authorized the Secretary-General to submit his report on desertification and drought directly to the General Assembly (**decision 1997/205**).

UNDP action. On 19 September [E/1997/33 (dec. 97/24)], the UNDP Executive Board approved a gross appropriation of \$5.85 million for the

1998-1999 biennial support budget for UNDP/UNSO. It asked the UNDP Administrator to report in 1998 on progress in implementing that budget.

Conference of Parties

The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa (INCD), held its tenth session (New York, 6-17 January) [A/52/82] and a resumed tenth session (Geneva, 18-22 August) [A/52/82/Add.1] to prepare for the first Conference of the Parties. INCD adopted decisions related to functions of a global mechanism, the accreditation of NGOs, the designation of a permanent secretariat, administrative and support arrangements and the identification of an organization to house the global mechanism, which was to promote actions to mobilize and channel financial resources.

The Conference of the Parties, at its first session (Rome, Italy, 29 September-10 October) [ICCD/COP(1)/11 & Add.1], accepted an offer by the UN Secretary-General to provide administrative and support arrangements for the Convention secretariat and asked him, in consultation with the Conference, to appoint the first head of the secretariat. The Conference decided to accept the offer of Germany to host the permanent secretariat in Bonn and selected the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to house the global mechanism. The 1999 budget and programme was adopted, and parties, as well as Governments of States not parties, intergovernmental organizations and NGOs were invited to make contributions to the Supplementary Fund and the Special Fund of the Convention. The Conference decided to review the implementation of the Convention at its second session, to be held in Dakar, Senegal, from 24 August to 4 September 1998. It adopted procedures for the communication of information and review of implementation. Other decisions dealt with the terms of reference of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) and its work programme; other bodies performing work similar to that of CST, and procedures for establishing ad hoc panels.

Report of Secretary-General. As requested by the General Assembly in resolution 51/180 [YUN 1996, p. 958], the Secretary-General, in a November report [A/52/549], discussed action to implement the Convention by States, INCD and the interim secretariat and reviewed the substantive decisions adopted at the Conference of the Parties at its first session. He also reviewed the institutional,

administrative and financial implications of the Conference decisions.

The Secretary-General summarized requests made by the Conference to the General Assembly, which included: endorsing the institutional linkage between the permanent secretariat and the United Nations and providing for its review; requesting the Secretary-General to authorize the head of the interim secretariat to use in 1998 the Special Voluntary Fund and the Trust Fund, established by the Assembly in resolution 47/188 [YUN 1992, p. 686]; approving conference-servicing costs for the duration of the institutional linkage of the permanent secretariat to the United Nations; and requesting the transfer of any amounts remaining in the Trust Fund and the Special Voluntary Fund as at 31 December 1998 to the Supplementary Fund and to the Special Fund to be established. The Secretary-General was asked to appoint the head of the Convention secretariat for a three-year period starting on 1 January 1999; authorize the use of the Special Voluntary Fund to assist developing countries to participate in the second session of the Conference; and similarly authorize the use of the Trust Fund to support the participation of NGOs in the session.

Committee on Science and Technology

The Committee on Science and Technology, a subsidiary body of the Conference, held its first session (Rome, 29 September-10 October). It considered proposals by seven organizations to undertake a survey and evaluation of existing networks, institutions, agencies and bodies willing to become units of a network to support implementation of the Convention [ICCD/COP(1)/CST/2 & Add.1]. It also reviewed comments and suggestions from INCD members and international organizations concerning indicators relating to Convention implementation, benchmarks and environmental impact indicators [ICCD/COP(1)/CST/3 & Add.1]. CST examined suggestions on its methods of work [ICCD/COP(1)/CST/5] and the activities of other bodies performing similar work [ICCD/COP(1)/CST/4].

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 18 December [meeting 77], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Second Committee [A/52/629/Add.2], adopted **resolution 52/198** without vote [agenda item 98 (b)].

Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought, and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 47/188 of 22 December 1992, 48/191 of 21 December 1993, 49/234 of 23 De-

cember 1994, 50/112 of 20 December 1995, 51/180 of 16 December 1996 and 51/238 of 17 June 1997,

Noting with satisfaction that a large number of States have ratified the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, and calling upon other States to take appropriate action to that end,

Noting that, in accordance with paragraphs 4 and 5 of its resolution 51/180, the first session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention was held at Rome from 29 September to 10 October 1997 and that it was attended by one hundred and two parties and by a large number of observers from Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations,

Expressing its deep appreciation to the Government of Italy for the generous manner in which it hosted the first session of the Conference of the Parties and to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations for the facilities it provided,

Recognizing the contribution to the convention process of the interim secretariat of the Convention, within the framework of the former Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development of the Secretariat, as well as the support provided to the interim secretariat by all bilateral and multilateral contributors, including regional and non-governmental organizations,

Recognizing also the support provided during the interim phase of the Convention to the launching of national, subregional and regional action programme processes in response to the resolution on urgent action for Africa, and the support provided to the interim activities in other regions carried out by Governments, regional economic integration organizations, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations, as well as by specialized agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system,

Noting the offer made by the Secretary-General to provide administrative and support arrangements in the framework of an institutional linkage of the Convention secretariat to the United Nations,

Taking note of the decision of the Conference of the Parties, on the basis of the offer made by the Secretary-General, that the Convention secretariat should be institutionally linked to the United Nations, while not being fully integrated into the work programme and management structure of any particular department or programme,

Taking note also of the financial rules of the Conference of the Parties, its subsidiary bodies and the secretariat of the Convention, adopted by the Conference at its first session, whereby, inter alia, the Secretary-General, at 1 January 1999, is requested to establish trust funds (general, supplementary and special funds) for the purposes of the Convention, to be managed by the head of the Convention secretariat in accordance with the relevant financial rules and within the duly delegated authority,

Taking note further of the decision of the Conference of the Parties at its first session that the General Assembly be requested to decide, bearing in mind the institutional linkage of the Convention secretariat to the United Nations and the large number of States that are parties to the Convention, to finance from the regular programme budget of the United Nations the

conference-servicing costs arising from sessions of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies for the duration of the institutional linkage,

Taking note of the reports of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa on its tenth session, held in New York from 6 to 17 January 1997, and its resumed tenth session, held at Geneva from 18 to 22 August 1997, and the report of the Conference of the Parties on its first session,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 51/180, in particular paragraph 15,

1. Approves the institutional linkage between the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, and the United Nations, in accordance with the offer made by the Secretary-General and as accepted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention at its first session;

2. Requests the Secretary-General to review the functioning of the institutional linkage, including the financing arrangements, not later than 31 December 2000, in consultation with the Conference of the Parties, with a view to making such modifications as may be considered desirable by the General Assembly and the Conference, and to report thereon to the Assembly;

3. Notes that the Conference of the Parties has decided to accept the offer of the Government of Germany to host the Convention secretariat at Bonn, and expresses its appreciation for the support offered by the future host Government with respect to the relocation and effective functioning of the Convention secretariat;

4. Expresses its appreciation to the Government of Switzerland, which hosted the interim secretariat, and to the Government of Canada and the Government of Spain, which offered to host the Convention secretariat, and invites them to continue to support the permanent secretariat and to contribute to the implementation of the Convention;

5. Welcomes the selection by the Conference of the Parties at its first session of the International Fund for Agricultural Development to house the Global Mechanism and, in accordance with the decision of the Conference, invites the Fund, as the lead organization, to cooperate fully with the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank;

6. Takes note of the statement of the President of the Conference of the Parties at the closing of the first session, and, in this context, invites the Conference to facilitate the elaboration of an additional regional implementation annex to the Convention for the countries of the eastern and central European region to be launched at the second session of the Conference in 1998, in accordance with the goals and objectives of the Convention, and with a view to finalizing it as soon as possible;

7. Urges Governments and all interested organizations, including non-governmental organizations and the private sector, to make promptly the voluntary contributions necessary to ensure that the Global Mechanism can begin operating on 1 January 1998;

8. Requests the Secretary-General, bearing in mind the decision taken by the Conference of the Parties at its first session:

(a) To authorize the interim secretariat established pursuant to resolution 47/188 to act as the secretariat for the transition period following the first session of the Conference of the Parties until the permanent secretariat designated by the Conference begins operating by 1 January 1999;

(b) To maintain the arrangements within the current programme budget for the interim secretariat to support the Convention until the permanent secretariat begins operating by 1 January 1999 and to maintain the arrangements relating to extrabudgetary funds;

9. Notes with appreciation the contributions made to the Trust Fund established pursuant to resolution 47/188, and invites Governments, regional economic integration organizations and other interested organizations to continue to make voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund to support the interim secretariat and the work of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies for the transition period following the first session of the Conference;

10. Also notes with appreciation the contributions made to the Special Voluntary Fund established pursuant to resolution 47/188 to assist developing countries affected by desertification and drought, in particular the least developed countries, as well as representatives of non-governmental organizations of developing countries, to participate fully and effectively in the sessions of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies, and invites Governments, regional economic integration organizations and other organizations to continue to contribute generously to the Fund also for the transition period following the first session of the Conference;

11. Requests the Secretary-General to close, on 31 December 1998, the Trust Fund and the Special Voluntary Fund established under the provisions of resolution 47/188 and to transfer any amounts remaining in the Trust Fund and in the Special Voluntary Fund as of 31 December 1998, respectively, to the supplementary fund to be established pursuant to paragraph 9 of the financial rules and to the special fund to be established in accordance with paragraph 10 of the financial rules;

12. Renews its appeal to Governments, regional economic integration organizations and other interested organizations, as well as to non-governmental organizations and the private sector, to continue to contribute generously to the two extrabudgetary funds mentioned above for the transition period following the first session of the Conference of the Parties;

13. Calls upon all countries that are not parties to the Convention to take appropriate action for the ratification, acceptance, approval or accession to the Convention;

14. Stresses the necessity to advance, as soon as possible, the full implementation of the Convention, and, in this context, calls upon Governments of affected countries, as a matter of priority, to accelerate the processes of elaboration of national, subregional and regional action programmes, and calls upon the international community, in particular the developed countries, and the United Nations system, and invites the multilateral financial institutions and all other interested actors, to support the efforts of affected developing countries in

these processes by providing financial resources and other forms of assistance, in accordance with the relevant articles of the Convention and the decisions of the Conference of the Parties;

15. Urges all States that are parties to the Convention to pay promptly and in full on the first month of each year, starting on 1 January 1999, the contributions required for the core budget of the Convention envisaged in the financial rules, so as to ensure continuity in the cash flow required to finance the ongoing work of the Conference of the Parties, the subsidiary bodies, the permanent secretariat and the Global Mechanism;

16. Calls upon all countries, in particular developed countries, non-governmental organizations and the private sector to contribute generously to the trust funds (general, supplementary and special funds) to be established by the Secretary-General on 1 January 1999, in conformity with the financial rules of the Conference of the Parties, in order to facilitate activities under the Convention and to support the participation of representatives of developing and, in particular, least developed country parties affected by desertification and/or drought, particularly those in Africa, as well as the participation of some representatives of non-governmental organizations of those countries in the sessions of the Conference and its subsidiary bodies;

17. Decides to include in the calendar of conferences and meetings for the biennium 1998-1999 the sessions of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies envisaged for that biennium, taking into account the request of the Conference;

18. Takes note of the transitional arrangement for administrative support to the Convention secretariat, outlined in the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 51/180, with particular reference to the implications arising from the report of the Conference of the Parties on its first session, which should facilitate the establishment and relocation of the Convention secretariat and assist it in addressing any initial financial and personnel problems that may be encountered in that context;

19. Welcomes with appreciation the generous offer of the Government of Senegal to host the second session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention at Dakar from 30 November to 11 December 1998;

20. Requests the Secretary-General to bring the present resolution to the attention of all Governments, the relevant specialized agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, multilateral and bilateral financial institutions and other inter-governmental organizations, as well as to non-governmental organizations and the private sector;

21. Also requests the Secretary-General to report to it, at its fifty-third session, on the implementation of the present resolution;

22. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-third session the sub-item entitled "Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa".

Environmental activities

The atmosphere

Atmosphere and climate protection

A January report to the Commission on Sustainable Development [E/CN.17/1997/27Add.8], prepared by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as task manager for chapter 9 of Agenda 21 (protection of the atmosphere), reviewed the impact of energy production and consumption and of transportation on the atmosphere, particularly global climate change. It briefly mentioned the issues of the stratospheric ozone layer, transboundary atmospheric pollution and land-use.

Success since the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) [YUN 1992, p. 672] had been limited in controlling carbon dioxide emissions produced by burning fossil fuels, the report stated, and world total energy production and consumption and resulting carbon dioxide emissions continued to rise. However, a positive trend was seen as energy intensity was improving and the carbon intensity of energy was declining. In addition, the political will to address the problem of greenhouse gas emissions was increasing in many countries. There was a noticeable shift in government research and development budgets globally from the fossil energy sector to energy conservation and renewable energy. Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change had agreed to negotiate an agreement to limit greenhouse gas emissions in industrialized countries after the year 2000 (see above, under "International conventions and mechanisms").

Several government initiatives were being taken or considered to curb the environmental impact of transportation on the atmosphere, including promoting the use of cleaner transport fuels, encouraging the use of public transport and combating traffic congestion. Research on future engines, including electric and hybrid vehicles, and alternative fuels was under way.

As to other concerns, global production and consumption of major ozone-depleting substances had decreased markedly. Actions to address national issues in developed countries and agreements among industrialized countries had led to a reduction in transboundary air pollution and its impacts. Projects to conserve and sequester carbon varied from carbon conservation by protecting forests or developing sustainable for-

est management practices to increasing carbon pools through afforestation and agroforestry.

Efforts undertaken so far had been modest, however, as had the successes. Enormous efforts had to be made by Governments to reform their energy and transport-related policies and provide the needed market signals to ensure that moderate successes were strengthened in the long term. Obstacles to progress included limited policy changes in energy system planning and technology research; the inability of Governments and markets to incorporate environmental concerns in the energy and transport sectors; low fossil fuel prices; the development of an illegal trade in chlorofluorocarbons; and the difficulty for many developing countries to give priority to transboundary atmospheric pollution.

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), established by UNEP and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) to assess scientific information about climate change for international and national policy formulation, held its thirteenth session (9-11 July). IPCC approved the creation of the Data Distribution Centre (DDC) to facilitate the timely distribution of a consistent set of up-to-date scenarios of changes in climate and related environmental and socio-economic factors for use in climate impact assessments. It was determined at the thirteenth IPCC plenary meeting (Maldives, 22-28 September) that DDC would be a shared operation between the Climatic Research Unit in the United Kingdom and the Deutsches Klimarechenzentrum in Germany. Technical inputs from other centres or organizations with experience in preparing and distributing climate scenarios would also be solicited.

Terrestrial ecosystems

Biosafety and biodiversity

On 7 February [A/52/25 (dec. 19/16)], the UNEP Governing Council urged Governments and sub-regional and regional organizations to promote the implementation of the UNEP International Technical Guidelines for Safety in Biotechnology, adopted in 1995 [YUN 1995, p. 1078], by designating national focal points to apply the Guidelines. The Executive Director was asked to continue to promote the implementation of the Guidelines, particularly in developing countries, and to explore with other UN and international bodies the mutual sharing of information about organisms with novel traits contained on interna-

tional databases and the rationalization of the databases, in order to avoid duplication of sources of information and the need for the multiple entry of data. She was also asked to organize within two years a second international workshop on the implementation of the Guidelines and periodically to review progress made in implementing them. The Council asked her to report in 1999 on progress made.

Desertification and drought control

In a January report [E/CN.17/1997/2/Add.11] to the Commission on Sustainable Development, prepared by UNEP as task manager for chapter 12 of Agenda 21 (combating desertification and drought), the Secretary-General stated that since the adoption of the Convention to combat desertification in 1994 [YUN 1994, p. 944] there had been significant efforts in Africa to place land degradation and desertification issues at the centre of the political agenda for Africa's socio-economic recovery. Greater recognition of the issue outside Africa was evident, and renewed efforts were being made by several organizations, particularly UNEP, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to seek, evaluate and publicize success stories in sustainable dryland management. Although political commitment had increased in the affected countries, the issue was not always high on ministers' lists of priorities for action, and resources were frequently not available. Despite the major role that NGOs played in supporting improved environmental management of the drylands and the strong support of smaller NGOs at the negotiations for the Convention, it was disappointing that the larger international NGOs had not played a more prominent role in the follow-up process.

Emerging priorities regarding desertification and drought involved implementation of the Convention; capacity-building for implementation in affected countries; awareness-raising in affected and non-affected countries of the importance of dryland environments and the significance of the desertification issue; and development of drought-preparedness plans.

Deforestation and forest degradation

Commission action. The Secretary-General submitted to the Commission on Sustainable Development a January report [E/CN.17/1997/2/Add.10], prepared by FAO as task manager for chapter 11 of Agenda 21 (combating deforestation), on combating deforestation and the Non-Legally Binding Authoritative Statement of Principles for a Global Consensus on the Management,

Conservation and Sustainable Development of All Types of Forests (the Forest Principles). The Forest Principles constituted a non-legally binding instrument, agreed upon at UNCED [YUN 1992, p. 674], that provided a framework for the sustainable development of all types of forests, while recognizing the sovereign right of countries over their forest resources.

Significant progress had been made at the planning and policy levels. In most countries, forestry and forest-related activities were undergoing radical and complex changes. Fifty developing countries had completed a strategic planning exercise and another 20 were in the process of doing so. In several industrialized countries, national strategies for sustainable forest management had been formulated and adopted by parliaments. Some progress was made on financing sustainable forest management. Technology transfer and capacity-building had advanced in the areas of disseminating information on how to improve land-use planning and forest yields; developing and implementing national forest strategies; technology and methods to reduce environmental damage due to forestry practices; species research for tree improvement for rehabilitation; reforestation and nursery development; new and renewable sources of energy; and environmentally sound logging technologies. However, areas such as trade in lesser-used species, valuation of forests and forest resources and traditional forest-related knowledge had received inadequate attention.

In the area of forest assessment, a framework for the global Forest Resources Assessment 2000 and the core set of definitions were agreed upon in an expert consultation organized by FAO in 1996. A basis of tested methods and data organization mechanisms was in place. Efforts had been made to increase national capacities in forest assessment by FAO, the European Community and the International Union of Forest Research Organizations. Over 50 countries had established mechanisms and institutions for continuous national resources assessment.

Concerning trade in forest products, the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations (see PART THREE, Chapter IV) had made significant progress in improving market access for forest products, especially in terms of reducing tariffs for all types of forest products. However, forest products market transparency and forest management cost internalization were still unsolved issues. The setting up of the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) under the auspices of the Commission had allowed for substantial progress towards a more coordinated col-

laboration between international instruments and organizations.

Despite progress made, there were policy constraints, a lack of country capacity in many developing countries and inadequate funding. Key issues related to international cooperation had to be addressed at the national, subregional, regional and global levels.

Priorities and recommendations were emerging from IPF discussions and would be considered at its February session (see below).

Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Panel. IPF, mandated to pursue a consensus and draw up options for further actions to combat deforestation and forest degradation and to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests, held its fourth session (New York, 11-21 February) [E/CN.17/1997/12]. The Panel presented proposals for action on its five main programme elements as follows: the implementation of UNCED decisions related to forests at the national and international levels, including an examination of sectoral and cross-sectoral links (national forest and land-use programmes, causes of deforestation and forest degradation, traditional forest-related knowledge, fragile ecosystems affected by desertification and drought, the impact of airborne pollution on forests, needs and requirements of countries with low forest cover); international cooperation in financial assistance and technology transfer (strengthening financial assistance, increasing private-sector investment, enhancing national capacity and national coordination, enhancing international cooperation, enhancing technology transfer and capacity-building, improving information systems); scientific research, forest assessment and development of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management (assessment of the multiple benefits of all types of forests, forest research, proper valuation of the multiple benefits of forests, criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management); trade and environment in relation to forest products and services (market access, the relative competitiveness of forest products, lesser-used species, certification and labelling, full-cost internalization, market transparency); and international organizations and multilateral institutions and instruments, including legal mechanisms.

On 25 April [E/1997/29 (dec. 5/102)], the Commission took note of the Panel's report.

Intergovernmental Forum on Forests

In July, the Economic and Social Council established the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF), under the aegis of the Commission on Sustainable Development, to work towards a le-

gaily binding instrument on the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests. The Forum was also charged with promoting the implementation of the IPF proposals for action.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ACTION

On 25 July [meeting 42], the Economic and Social Council adopted **resolution 1997/65** [draft: E/1997/L.49] without vote [agenda item 7 (b)].

Establishment of an ad hoc open-ended Intergovernmental Forum on Forests of the Commission on Sustainable Development

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling its decision 1995/226 of 1 June 1995, approving the establishment of an ad hoc open-ended intergovernmental panel on forests of the Commission on Sustainable Development to pursue consensus and formulate coordinated proposals for action towards the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests,

Recognizing that the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests is a crucial factor in economic and social development, environmental protection and the Earth's life-support system,

Taking into account the decision taken by the General Assembly at its nineteenth special session to continue the intergovernmental policy dialogue on forests through the establishment of an ad hoc open-ended Intergovernmental Forum on Forests under the aegis of the Commission on Sustainable Development to work in an open, transparent and participatory manner, with a focused and time-limited mandate, charged with, *inter alia*, (a) promoting and facilitating the implementation of the proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests; (b) reviewing, monitoring and reporting on progress in the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests; and © considering matters left pending as regards the programme elements of the Intergovernmental Panel, in particular trade and environment in relation to forest products and services, transfer of technology and the need for financial resources,

Taking into account also the decision of the General Assembly at its nineteenth special session that the Forum should identify the possible elements of and work towards consensus on international arrangements and mechanisms, for example, a legally binding instrument, and should report on its work to the Commission on Sustainable Development in 1999; based on that report, and depending on the decision of the Commission at its eighth session, the Forum should engage in further action on establishing an intergovernmental negotiation process on new arrangements and mechanisms or a legally binding instrument on all types of forests; the Forum should convene as soon as possible to elaborate further its terms of reference and decide on organizational matters; and the Forum should be serviced by a small secretariat within the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, supported by voluntary extrabudgetary contributions from Governments and international organizations,

1. Decides to establish, under the aegis of the Commission on Sustainable Development, an ad hoc, open-ended Intergovernmental Forum on Forests as envisaged above, which will report to the Commission at its eighth session in 2000;

2. Also decides that the Forum should hold its first (organizational) session in New York from 1 to 3 October 1997 so that the preparations for its substantive sessions can start without delay;

3. Further decides that, at its first session, the Forum shall schedule its programme of work, decide on the modalities of its work, including the election and designation of officers, and recommend to the Council the number, venue and duration of its substantive sessions, which could be of up to two weeks each, and, recognizing the wide range of issues to be addressed, decides that the Forum may consider dividing its work between in-session working groups, on the understanding that no more than two working groups would meet simultaneously;

4. Decides that the Forum should be serviced by a small secretariat within the secretariat of the Commission on Sustainable Development, supported by voluntary extrabudgetary contributions from Governments and international organizations, that the operation of the Forum will require funding to support activities as well as meetings and participation by representatives of developing countries and major groups from developing countries, that the participation of major groups should be in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Commission and that, in this regard, the following sources of funding should be considered: voluntary extrabudgetary contributions from Governments and international organizations to support the work of the Forum, secondments from international organizations and in-kind contributions from countries and international organizations, including the hosting of meetings;

5. Encourages interested Governments and organizations to make early voluntary contributions to ensure that the work of the Forum starts quickly;

6. Recommends that support from the United Nations system should, as far as possible, be derived from the reallocation of resources within the existing budgets of United Nations bodies in order to respond to high-priority activities.

At its first session (New York, 1-3 October) [E/CN.17/IFF/1997/4], IFF elected its officers, adopted its agenda, established its work programme, proposed to the Economic and Social Council dates and venues of its future sessions and considered the question of the participation of intergovernmental organizations in its work.

Concerning its work programme, IFF decided that it should consider the following categories of activities: category I, promoting the implementation of IPF proposals for action and reviewing and reporting on progress in the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests; category II, considering issues arising from IPF programme elements, including matters left pending on the need for financial resources, on trade and environment, and on the

transfer of environmentally sound technologies to support sustainable forest management, other issues needing further clarification (transboundary economic forces of deforestation, traditional forest-related knowledge, valuation of forest goods and services, forest cover in environmentally critical areas, forest conservation, research priorities, future supply and demand of wood and non-wood forest products and services); and category III, international arrangements and mechanisms to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests.

The Economic and Social Council, by **decision 1997/317** of 16 December, approved the IFF recommendations that it carry out its work in three substantive sessions of up to two weeks each (second session, 24 August-September 1998, Geneva; third session, February/March 1999, Geneva; fourth session, February/March 2000, venue to be determined) and that it establish in-session working groups, no more than two to be scheduled to meet simultaneously. On the same date, the Council, by **decision 1997/318**, took note of the IFF decision to invite the Centre for International Forestry Research to attend its sessions as an intergovernmental organization with the status of observer.

Sustainable mountain development

The Commission on Sustainable Development considered a January report [E/CN.17/1997/2/Add.12] prepared by FAO as task manager for chapter 13 of Agenda 21 (managing fragile ecosystems: sustainable mountain development).

According to the report, progress had been made in creating greater awareness of the mountain agenda and improving the coordination of efforts to protect fragile mountain ecosystems and promote sustainable mountain development. New institutional arrangements had contributed to improving communications networking and in providing an information clearing-house function. Land-use planning and management tools were being developed for mountain watershed areas through the preparation of principles and best practices for sustainable mountain development programmes. In the area of biodiversity conservation in mountain areas, countries had established new protected areas and undertaken trans-frontier collaboration in protected area management. Another positive development was the formulation of criteria and indicators for sustainable mountain development, which focused on the condition of natural resources, human welfare and population dynamics.

Improvements to the ecological knowledge base for technologies and agricultural and conservation practices in mountain regions had been slow but were increasing. Transnational cooperation also had been improving. Work had progressed on the better understanding and dissemination of information regarding environmental risks and natural disasters in mountain ecosystems.

Several objectives of Agenda 21 relating to sustainable mountain development remained unfulfilled or had seen little or no progress towards implementation, such as survey work of natural resources and their use in mountain ecosystems, development of national-level institutional arrangements, and attention to the special needs of mountainous island and landlocked countries.

The report mentioned areas where obstacles to achievement could be overcome, including: greater action at the national level; new or reinforced legal mechanisms, such as charters, conventions and national legislation to protect mountain ecosystems; greater mobilization of financial resources for mountain development; more mountain-specific investment programmes and financial resources; the preservation of cultural integrity and conservation of biological diversity; monitoring progress; exchanging experience and information; and enhancing food security in a sustainable manner.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ACTION

On 22 July [meeting 37], the Economic and Social Council adopted **resolution 1997/45** [draft: E/1997/L.31] without vote [agenda item 6 (i)].

Proclamation of an international year of mountains

The Economic and Social Council,

Mindful that mountains represent an essential component of the global life-support system and a positive asset offering opportunities for sustainable development, if adequately managed on the basis of the best available scientific knowledge and with due regard to the protection of nature and the interests of humankind,

Recognizing that, as a major ecosystem representing the complex and interrelated ecology of this planet, mountains are essential to the survival of the global ecosystem and play an important role in shaping life on Earth,

Noting that mountains are an important source of water, energy, minerals, forest and agricultural products and biological diversity, which are all of vital importance to both individual States and the international community,

Bearing in mind that mountains cover at least one fifth of the Earth's landscape and are home to at least 10 per cent of the world's population, predominantly economically poor people,

Recognizing that it is economically and socially more costly to sustain life in mountain areas than in lowland

areas, and concerned about the widespread poverty, unemployment and poor health among mountain inhabitants and the loss of indigenous knowledge,

Confirming that, at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992, the international community recognized that there was a lack of knowledge about mountain ecosystems and called for renewed international and regional cooperation to develop an integrated approach for conserving, upgrading and using the land, water, plant, animal and human resources and promoting alternative livelihood opportunities for mountain inhabitants with a view to improving their living standards,

Welcoming the various regional and subregional initiatives and international instruments, such as the Alpine Convention, which provide frameworks for international cooperation for the protection of mountain environments,

Recalling its decision 1995/235 of 17 July 1995 on the report of the Commission on Sustainable Development, and taking note of the decisions of the General Assembly at its nineteenth special session on the overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21,

Bearing in mind that an international conference entitled "Mountain research: challenges and prospects in the twenty-first century" was held at Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, from 14 to 18 October 1996 and adopted a decision to draw the attention of the international community to the exceptional importance of mountain ranges for mankind and to propose that the General Assembly declare an international year of mountains,

Recalling its resolution 1980/67 of 25 July 1980, in which it recognized that the celebration of international years can promote international cooperation and understanding in accordance with the guidelines contained therein,

1. Invites Governments, in cooperation with relevant regional and international organizations, to undertake awareness-raising activities concerning the problems and challenges faced by mountainous countries and communities;

2. Encourages Governments and intergovernmental organizations to coordinate regional and international cooperation and facilitate the exchange of information and experience among the specialized agencies and relevant regional and international organizations, research institutions and non-governmental organizations on issues related to mountain regions, including the manageability and interaction of mountains and the economy, the impact of mountains on the socio-economic development of countries and sustainable human development, and the like;

3. Welcomes and supports the ongoing efforts to prepare and negotiate subregional and interregional agreements on mountains, thus reinforcing legal mechanisms to protect fragile mountain ecosystems and promote sustainable and equitable development in mountain regions;

4. Encourages national, regional and international networking of people's initiatives and the activities of local, regional and international non-governmental organizations working on mountain development, and supports those organizations in their efforts to exchange information and experience;

5. Requests the Secretary-General, in consultation with Governments and relevant regional, international and non-governmental organizations, to submit to the Council at its substantive session of 1998 a report on the desirability of proclaiming an international year of mountains and on other ways and means of ensuring the sustainable development of mountain countries.

Land resources

The Commission on Sustainable Development considered a January report [E/CN.17/1997/2/Add.9] prepared by FAO as task manager for chapter 10 of Agenda 21 (integrated approach to the planning and management of land resources).

Among successes in that area, many countries had developed or were developing environmental policies and, despite some difficulties, a number of land resources information systems had been established. In addition, a useful body of experience was being built up by Governments, NGOs and development agencies in developing countries, which was beginning to be analysed.

More progress was needed in the area of institutional arrangements, particularly government institutions, and coordinating mechanisms. There was a need to develop land-related information systems in developing countries, which had been limited by the non-availability of basic natural resource data and information, by undeveloped market infrastructure and by a lack of institutional capability.

The need to devise and apply more efficient systems of resource management was emerging as a priority as the result of increased population levels and unsustainable resource use. Continuing rapid urbanization in developing countries was resulting in land-use changes, which were manifested in the development of squatter settlements and slums and attendant problems of pollution, water supply, waste disposal and a host of social and economic concerns. Another priority was the need to prepare and continuously update plans to address the effects of natural disasters.

Marine ecosystems

Protection of the marine and coastal environment

Commission action. The Commission on Sustainable Development reviewed a January report [E/CN.17/1997/2/Add.16] prepared by the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas, as task manager for chapter 17 of Agenda 21 (protection of the oceans, all kinds of seas, including enclosed and semi-enclosed seas, and coastal areas

and the protection, rational use and development of their living resources).

Areas of progress to promote the sustainable utilization and conservation of the marine environment included acceptance of the concept of integrated management of watersheds, river basins, estuaries and marine and coastal areas; adoption by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) of new protocols or amendments to existing conventions to reduce sea-based pollutants (see PART SIX, Chapter XIV); improvement in the legal framework for the sustainable use and conservation of living aquatic resources in the oceans; agreement on a development approach, strategy and time-frame for the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS) and initiation of regional GOOS programmes; the adoption in 1995 of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities [YUN 1995, p. 1081]; and international cooperation and coordination for the sustainable use of the oceans by international, regional and national initiatives.

The report mentioned areas where expectations had not been met, including the need to improve intersectoral coordination at the national level and to better harmonize national policies; the degree of implementation of chapter 17 of Agenda 21; inadequate financing; and the quality and quantity of data and information being gathered and exchanged was decreasing owing to economic constraints. In addition, there was a pressing need to upgrade information and ocean observational systems; improve mechanisms, including institutions, to manage ocean resources; improve the availability of technical assistance and finance; and increase the effectiveness of international cooperation.

ACC Subcommittee. The ACC Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas, at its fifth session (Washington, D.C., 7-10 January) [ACC/1997/3], discussed matters relating to the inter-agency review of implementation planning for the 1995 Global Programme of Action, its activities with respect to the overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21 and the International Year of the Ocean, 1998, proclaimed by the General Assembly in resolution 49/131 [YUN 1994, p. 951]. Considerable discussion was generated by an FAO proposal to develop a UN ocean atlas in a digitized format, which would be made available in CD-ROM format as well as on the Internet. The Subcommittee decided to include the development of the atlas as one of its cooperative programme frameworks. FAO was designated as the lead agency.

UNEP action. On 7 February [A/52/25 (dec. 19/14 C)], the UNEP Governing Council asked the

Executive Director to support the Commission on Sustainable Development in carrying out the periodic review of the world's marine environment as called for by the Commission in 1996 [YUN 1996, p. 966]. It also asked her to consider how the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection might contribute to the review.

On the same date [dec. 19/14 D], the Council asked the Executive Director to place a higher priority on fresh water in the next biennium and to make more effective use of the inter-agency Global Environment Monitoring System/Water programme, which was coordinated by UNEP.

Global Programme of Action

The UNEP Governing Council considered several reports relating to the 1995 Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities [YUN 1995, p. 1081]. A report of the Executive Director [UNEP/GC.19/25] summarized UNEP's role as secretariat of the Global Programme, which was to promote and facilitate implementation of the Programme at the national level, and at the regional level through a revitalization of the UNEP Regional Seas Programme, as well as to play a catalytic role in implementation at the international level with other organizations and institutions. The Executive Director presented the subsequent stages of preparation of the implementation plan. Regional and international cooperation in implementing the Programme, including the clearing-house mechanisms and activities relating to the assessment of the state of oceans and coastal waters, as well as to persistent organic pollutants and sewage, was also discussed.

In an addendum [UNEP/GC.19/25/Add.1], the Executive Director proposed that future intergovernmental reviews of progress in implementing the Programme would have to be done biennially for Member States to have the opportunity to appraise progress achieved on a more regular basis. She also suggested that the Council establish at its regular sessions a standing item entitled "Implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities".

In another report [UNEP/GC.19/INF.4], the Executive Director described institutional arrangements for implementing the Global Programme, including UNEP's role as its secretariat. The Council also examined an ACC report [UNEP/GC.19/12] on the involvement of the UN system in the Programme, particularly inter-agency coordination in implementing it.

On 7 February [A/52/25 (dec. 19/14 A)], the Council endorsed the proposed role of UNEP as secretariat and accorded priority to implementation of the Programme in the UNEP work programme. It asked the Executive Director to: expand the activities of the Programme to all regional seas programmes and establish links with other regional programmes or conventions for the protection of marine and freshwater environments; strengthen the integrated management of UNEP activities related to freshwater and marine environments; recommend that each international organization formally endorse the parts of the Programme that were relevant to its mandate; convey to the General Assembly and the Council of the Global Environment Facility the Council's invitation for adequate consideration of the financing of the projects that supported the Programme's objectives; and report in 1999 on progress made in implementing the Programme. ACC was asked to continue to report to the Council. The ACC Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas, in collaboration with the Subcommittee on Water, was asked to perform the functions of a steering committee on technical cooperation and assistance for the Programme.

Regional Seas Programme

The UNEP Regional Seas Programme, which in 1997 included 13 regions and had over 140 participating coastal States and Territories, encompassed a comprehensive approach to combating environmental degradation through the management of marine and coastal areas.

On 7 February [A/52/25 (dec. 19/14 B)], the Governing Council asked the Executive Director to pay attention to strengthening regional action plans for the protection of marine and coastal areas, such as those for the south-east Pacific and the wider Caribbean region, by allocating appropriate funds for the 1996-1997 biennium and taking appropriate measures for 1998-1999. It urged her to support a cooperation programme between Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay for the upper south-west Atlantic, and to direct that support during 1997-1998 to projects and activities directly related to the Global Programme of Action.

The Council, also on 7 February [dec. 19/14 E], asked the Executive Director to assist the Governments of the east central Pacific in negotiating an agreement to develop and implement a plan of action for the protection and management of the marine and coastal environment in the region. It asked her to report on progress in 1999.

Living marine resources

Drift-net fishing, unauthorized fishing and fisheries by-catch and discards

The Secretary-General submitted an October report [A/52/557] containing information received from States and international organizations on efforts made to implement General Assembly resolution 51/36 [YUN 1996, p. 968] regarding the impact on the living marine resources of the world's oceans and seas of large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing and unauthorized fishing in zones of national jurisdiction, and the impact on the sustainable use of the world's living marine resources of fisheries by-catch and discards.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 26 November [meeting 57], the General Assembly adopted **resolution 52/29** [draft: A/52/L.30 & Add.1] without vote [agenda item 39].

Large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing; unauthorized fishing in zones of national jurisdiction and on the high seas; fisheries by-catch and discards; and other developments

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming its resolutions 46/215 of 20 December 1991, 49/116 and 49/118 of 19 December 1994 as well as other relevant resolutions,

Reaffirming also its resolution 51/36 of 9 December 1996 on large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing and its impact on the living marine resources of the world's oceans and seas, unauthorized fishing in zones of national jurisdiction and its impact on the living marine resources of the world's oceans and seas, and fisheries by-catch and discards and their impact on the sustainable use of the world's living marine resources,

Conscious of the need to promote and facilitate international cooperation, especially at the regional and subregional levels, in order to ensure the sustainable development and use of the living marine resources of the world's oceans and seas, consistent with the present resolution,

Mindful that the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks provides in its general principles that States shall minimize pollution, waste, discards, catch by lost or abandoned gear, catch of non-target species, both fish and non-fish species, and impacts on associated or dependent species, in particular endangered species, through measures including, to the extent practicable, the development and use of selective, environmentally safe and cost-effective fishing gear and techniques, and further provides that States shall take measures, including the establishment of regulations, to ensure that vessels flying their flags do not conduct unauthorized fishing within areas under the national jurisdiction of other States,

Recalling the provisions of article 5 of the Agreement, which sets out the general principles to which

States are committed in order to conserve and manage such stocks,

Noting that the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, adopted by the Conference of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations on 31 October 1995, sets out principles and global standards of behaviour for responsible practices to conserve, manage and develop fisheries, including guidelines for fishing on the high seas and in areas under the national jurisdiction of other States, and on fishing gear selectivity and practices, with the aim of reducing by-catch and discards,

Expressing deep concern at the detrimental impact of unauthorized fishing in areas under national jurisdiction, where the overwhelming proportion of the global fish catch is harvested, on the sustainable development of the world's fishery resources and on the food security and economies of many States, particularly developing States,

Reaffirming once again the rights and duties of coastal States to ensure proper conservation and management measures with respect to the living resources in areas under their national jurisdiction, in accordance with international law as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea,

Recalling that Agenda 21, adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, calls upon States to take effective action, consistent with international law, to deter reflagging of vessels by their nationals as a means of avoiding compliance with applicable conservation and management rules for fishing vessels on the high seas,

Recognizing the importance of the Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas, adopted by the Conference of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in November 1993, to the conservation and management of fisheries resources on the high seas,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing and its impact on the living marine resources of the world's oceans and seas, unauthorized fishing in zones of national jurisdiction and its impact on the living marine resources of the world's oceans and seas, and fisheries by-catch and discards and their impact on the sustainable use of the world's living marine resources,

Taking note also of the initiatives undertaken in the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations relating to the incidental catch of seabirds, the conservation and management of sharks and the management of fishing capacity,

Acknowledging with appreciation the measures taken and the progress made by members of the international community, international organizations and regional economic integration organizations to implement and support the objectives of resolution 46/215,

Recognizing the efforts that international organizations and members of the international community have made to reduce by-catch and discards in fishing operations,

Once again expressing deep concern that there are continuing reports of activities inconsistent with the terms of resolution 46/215 and unauthorized fishing inconsistent with the terms of resolution 49/116,

1. Reaffirms the importance it attaches to compliance with its resolution 46/215, in particular to those provisions of the resolution calling for full implementation of a global moratorium on all large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing on the high seas of the world's oceans and seas, including enclosed seas and semi-enclosed seas;

2. Notes that a growing number of States and other entities as well as relevant regional and subregional fisheries management organizations and arrangements have adopted legislation, established regulations or applied other measures to ensure compliance with resolutions 46/215, 49/116 and 51/36, and urges them to enforce fully such measures;

3. Urges all authorities of members of the international community that have not done so to take greater enforcement responsibility to ensure full compliance with resolution 46/215 and to impose appropriate sanctions, consistent with their obligations under international law, against acts contrary to the terms of that resolution;

4. Calls upon States to take the responsibility, consistent with their obligations under international law as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and resolution 49/116, to take measures to ensure that no fishing vessels entitled to fly their national flags fish in areas under the national jurisdiction of other States unless duly authorized by the competent authorities of the coastal State or States concerned, and that such authorized fishing operations should be carried out in accordance with the conditions set out in the authorization;

5. Notes the obligations of States outlined in Parts IV and V of the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks regarding non-members and non-participants and duties of flag States respectively;

6. Calls upon States and other entities referred to in article 10, paragraph 1, of the Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas that have not done so to accept the Agreement;

7. Notes that no party to the Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas shall allow any fishing vessel entitled to fly its flag to be used for fishing on the high seas unless it has been authorized to do so by the appropriate authority or authorities of that party, and that a fishing vessel so authorized shall fish in accordance with the conditions set out in the authorization;

8. Welcomes initiatives undertaken in the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to organize an expert consultation to develop and propose guidelines leading to a plan of action aiming at a reduction in the incidental catch of seabirds, to organize an expert consultation to develop and propose guidelines leading to a plan of action for the conservation and effective management of shark populations and to hold a technical consultation on the management of fishing capacity to draft guidelines for the control and management of fishing capacities;

9. Urges States, relevant international organizations and regional and subregional fisheries management organizations and arrangements to take action to adopt policies, apply measures, including through assistance to developing countries, collect and exchange data and develop techniques to reduce by-catches, fish discards and post-harvest losses consistent with international law and relevant international instruments, including the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries;

10. Reiterates its call on development assistance organizations to make it a high priority to support, including through financial and/or technical assistance, efforts of developing coastal States, in particular the least developed countries and the small island developing States, to improve the monitoring and control of fishing activities and the enforcement of fishing regulations, including through financial and technical support for regional and subregional meetings for this purpose;

11. Requests the Secretary-General to bring the present resolution to the attention of all members of the international community, relevant intergovernmental organizations, the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, regional and subregional fisheries management organizations and relevant non-governmental organizations, and invites them to provide the Secretary-General with information relevant to the implementation of the present resolution;

12. Also requests the Secretary-General to ensure that reporting on all major fisheries-related activities and instruments is effectively coordinated and duplication of activities and reporting minimized and that relevant scientific and technical studies are disseminated to the international community, and invites the relevant specialized agencies, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, as well as regional and subregional fisheries organizations and arrangements, to cooperate with the Secretary-General to that end;

13. Further requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session and biennially thereafter a report on further developments relating to the implementation of resolutions 46/215, 49/116 and 49/118, the status and implementation of the Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas and efforts undertaken in the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations referred to in paragraph 8 of the present resolution, taking into account the information provided by States, relevant specialized agencies, in particular the Food and Agriculture Organization, and other appropriate organs, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system, regional and subregional organizations and arrangements and other relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations;

14. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-third session, under the item entitled "Oceans and law of the sea", a sub-item entitled "Large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing; unauthorized fishing in zones of national jurisdiction and on the high seas; fisheries by-catch and discards; and other developments".

Coral reef initiative

The International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI), launched in 1995 [YUN 1995, p. 1084], was a partnership of Governments, international organizations, NGOs, multilateral development banks and private-sector groups, which aimed to increase the capacity of countries and local groups to conserve and sustainably use coral reefs and related ecosystems.

The International Year of the Reef, 1997, began a major effort of assessment, education and collaboration.

On 7 February [A/52/25 (dec. 19/15)], the UNEP Governing Council encouraged the Executive Director to continue to play a leading role in developing, implementing and coordinating regional activities under ICRI; to continue to sponsor the ICRI Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network; to build global awareness of the urgent need to conserve coral reef resources; and to promote the establishment of regional programmes in the six ICRI regions (Tropical Americas-Caribbean Region, East Asian Seas Region, Middle East-Gulfs Region, Pacific Region, South Asia Region, Western Indian Ocean-Eastern African States Region) and one or more demonstration projects in each region.

Conservation of wildlife

As at 31 December 1997, the 1994 Lusaka Agreement on Cooperative Enforcement Operations Directed at Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora [YUN 1994, p. 951], which entered into force in 1996 [YUN 1996, p. 970], had been ratified or acceded to by six States (Congo, Kenya, Lesotho, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia). The Agreement aimed to reduce, and ultimately eliminate, illegal trafficking in African wildlife.

Protection against harmful products and wastes

Chemical safety

Prior informed consent procedure

Governing Council action. The UNEP Governing Council considered a progress report [UNEP/GC.19/24] by the Executive Director on the development of an international legally binding instrument for the application of the prior informed consent (PIC) procedure for certain hazardous chemicals in international trade, and the consideration of further measures to reduce risks from hazardous chemicals. The Executive Director outlined progress made in 1996 by the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee in the de-

velopment of such an instrument [YUN 1996, p. 970] and the implementation of the voluntary PIC procedure through the UNEP/FAO Joint Programme.

On 7 February [A/52/25 (dec. 19/13 A)], the Council asked the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to continue its work on the instrument, with the aim of concluding negotiations during the year. The Executive Director was asked to convene, together with the FAO Director-General, a conference to adopt and sign the instrument.

Intergovernmental committee. The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for an International Legally Binding Instrument for the Application of the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, at its third session (Geneva, 26-30 May) [UNEP/FAO/PIC/INC.3/2], examined articles of the draft convention relating to the scope of the convention, hazardous pesticide formulations, obligations of parties that imported chemicals, obligations of parties that exported chemicals, and financial resources and mechanisms. Other matters dealt with the Committee's future sessions and provisions concerning a secretariat for the convention. Annexed to the Committee's report was the text of the draft articles as revised at its second [YUN 1996, p. 971] and third sessions.

At the Committee's fourth session (Rome, 20-24 October) [UNEP/FAO/PIC/INC.4/2], it discussed articles related to designated national authorities, informing parties of regulatory measures, banned or severely restricted chemicals, hazardous pesticide formulations, the inclusion of a chemical list in an annex, chemicals in the voluntary PIC procedure, removal of chemicals from an annex, classification, packaging and labelling, information exchange, control of trade with non-parties, implementation of the convention, technical assistance, the conference of the parties, the secretariat, amendments to the convention, the adoption and amendment of annexes, protocols, the right to vote, signature, ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, entry into force, reservations, withdrawal, interim arrangements, the depositary and authentic texts. Annexed to the report were draft articles as revised by the Committee at its second, third and fourth sessions.

The Committee decided to hold its next session in Brussels, Belgium, in early 1998.

Reduction of risks

The UNEP Governing Council considered a report of the Executive Director on hazardous chemicals, which included measures to reduce the risks from those substances [UNEP/GC.19/24].

She highlighted the 1996 recommendations of the Government-designated Group of Experts on Further Measures to Reduce the Risks from a Limited Number of Chemicals [YUN 1996, p. 970], which dealt with unwanted stocks of pesticides and other chemicals; capacity-building; inadequate information; and issues related to risk reduction from a limited number of hazardous chemicals, including possible bans or phase-outs.

On 7 February [A/52/25 (dec. 19/13 B)], the Council endorsed the recommendations of the Group regarding unwanted stocks, capacity-building and inadequate information, and noted the recommendations concerning issues related to risk reduction. It invited Governments, intergovernmental organizations and the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS) to review the Group's report, to consider taking action to implement its recommendations and to report thereon in 1999.

Canada, on behalf of IFCS, transmitted to the Commission on Sustainable Development an IFCS progress report covering the years 1994 to 1997 [E/CN.17/1997/20]. IFCS held its second session in Ottawa from 10 to 14 February.

Persistent organic pollutants

The Executive Director transmitted to the Governing Council the 1996 report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) of IFCS [YUN 1996, p. 971]. The Council also had before it a report of the Executive Director [UNEP/GC.19/23] presenting the outcome of the assessment of the 12 POPs (polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), dioxins, furans, aldrin, dieldrin, DDT, endrin, chlordane, hexachlorobenzene, mirex, toxaphene, heptachlor), as well as the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Working Group.

On 7 February [A/52/25 (dec. 19/13 O)], the Council, taking note of the Executive Director's report, decided that immediate international action should be initiated to protect human health and the environment through measures that would reduce and/or eliminate the emissions and discharges of the 12 POPs and, where appropriate, eliminate production and subsequently the remaining use of those POPs that were intentionally produced. It also decided that socio-economic factors should be addressed in developing and implementing international action. The Executive Director was asked to prepare for and convene, together with the World Health Organization (WHO) and other international organizations, an intergovernmental negotiating committee to prepare an international legally binding instrument for implementing international action initially beginning with the 12 POPs and to take into account the conclusions and recom-

mendations of the Ad Hoc Working Group on POPs. The Council recommended that, during the development of a legally binding instrument, consideration be given to work under way within the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe to develop a regional protocol on POPs under the 1979 Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution [YUN 1979, p. 710]. The Executive Director was asked to convene a diplomatic conference to adopt and sign an international legally binding instrument for international action to reduce/eliminate the release of POPs, to be concluded preferably by 2000. She was also asked, in collaboration with other international and regional organizations, to initiate immediate action on the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Working Group on POPs.

Sound management of toxic chemicals

Commission action. The Commission on Sustainable Development reviewed a January report [E/CN.17/1997/27/Add.18] on chapter 19 of Agenda 21 (the environmentally sound management of toxic chemicals, including prevention of illegal international traffic in toxic and dangerous products), prepared by UNEP as task manager for the item.

The report noted progress in creating several mechanisms, such as IFCS, a non-institutional mechanism for cooperation among Governments, intergovernmental organizations and NGOs for the promotion of chemical risk-assessment and environmentally sound management of chemicals; and the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC), which coordinated efforts of international and intergovernmental organizations on the assessment and management of chemicals. Work was well under way to develop a process for the international assessment of existing chemicals and pesticides, and the target of 200 chemical evaluations by 1997 was expected to be met. A coordination group on information exchange was formed under IOMC. UNEP and FAO were jointly implementing the PIC procedure. There were 148 countries participating in the voluntary procedure, with 17 chemicals subject to it. Several intergovernmental bodies and UN agencies were engaged in activities on lead contamination.

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) Regional Network on Pesticides in Asia and the Pacific had been expanded to 15 countries. FAO was assisting countries in Asia to establish integrated pest management, a strategy for reducing reliance on pesticides. Sources of information useful when responding to chemical emergencies had been established in

many countries and regions, and access to their sources had been improved.

While noting several promising changes in the management of toxic chemicals, the report said that progress on the proposed strengthening of international institutions and networks for information exchange on toxic chemicals had been less than what was needed, and consequently the improvements hoped for in the global sharing of data had not been realized.

A series of emerging priorities was evident in recent initiatives on priority chemical issues. Progress was being made in the development of international legally binding instruments for implementing international actions to reduce and manage risks and they should be pursued. In addition, Governments had identified the management and disposal of obsolete stocks of pesticides and possibly other chemicals as a high priority, and concern had emerged about certain toxic chemicals that might produce adverse effects at low environmental levels.

Council action. On 7 February [A/52/25 (dec. 19/13 D)], the UNEP Governing Council asked the Executive Director, in collaboration with IOMC, to develop a report outlining options for enhanced coherence and efficiency among international activities related to chemicals, including the instrument on PIC procedure and a likely future agreement on POPs. It asked her to submit the report in 1999 and to forward it to IFCS.

Hazardous wastes

The Commission on Sustainable Development considered two reports on hazardous wastes. The first [E/CN.17/1997/2/Add.20] discussed the environmentally sound management of solid wastes and sewage-related issues and was prepared by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS) as task manager for chapter 21 of Agenda 21 (solid wastes and sewage). According to the report, the development and implementation of waste minimizing strategies had improved since UNCED, but mainly in developed countries. In developing countries, attempts to promote waste minimization had been hampered by the lack of data on waste production at sources and waste collection and disposal. UNCHS was assisting developing countries with data collection and policy options for waste minimization. Significant developments were reported in waste recycling and reuse, in both developed and developing countries. Where the private sector had undertaken some of the traditional public waste management services, improvements were seen in high-income residential areas and in some cases in commercial and industrial areas, while

low- and middle-income areas still suffered from extremely poor service coverage.

Possibly the most promising change in solid-waste management worldwide was the increasing recognition of waste as a resource that could not only contribute to the local and national economies but also provide employment and income to a large section of the population. Another promising change was found in the attitude of municipalities and other levels of government towards waste minimization as an integral part of the strategy for waste management. Little progress had been made in the area of environmentally sound waste disposal in developing countries. Also, countries were producing increasing quantities of wastewater, often contaminated with heavy metals and water-soluble organic compounds. Many national and local governments had insufficient capacity to apply strategic planning to solid-waste management. Little effort had been made to improve the education of the general public and city officials regarding the health risks of poor waste-management practices.

Emerging priorities centred on the development of waste minimization policies and strategies for decision-making. Continued and strengthened integration between waste management and other economic sectors was another emerging priority, as was support of the informal sector so that it could actively contribute to waste-management activities. Efforts were needed to promote integrated waste-management schemes that utilized solid and liquid waste for agricultural reuse projects. Within the UN system, there was a need for a more concerted approach to solid-waste management and for strengthening coordination of programmes under the aegis of the Inter-agency Committee on Sustainable Development.

The second report on hazardous wastes [E/CN.17/1997/27Add.21] discussed the safe and environmentally sound management of radioactive wastes and was prepared by IAEA as task manager for chapter 22 (radioactive wastes) of Agenda 21. It noted progress in management-related activities, capacity-building and legal instruments. The relaxation of tensions since the end of the cold war had made available previously classified information on radioactive releases and their environmental impacts, which in turn had stimulated research on radionuclides in the environment. France had requested IAEA to assess the full radiological situation at Fangataufa atolls, taking into account all past events of radiological significance (see PART ONE, Chapter VII). IAEA was initiating a survey of its members that were, or would be, engaged in the remediation of radioactively contaminated envi-

ronments in order to collect data about sites that would require environmental restoration. Technical assistance was being offered to developing countries for enclosing and sealing radium sources for safe storage.

Despite an awareness of the importance of radiation and waste safety, there was a lack of adequate national radiation and waste safety infrastructure. The nuclear industry lacked funds, and the problems created by the accumulation of radioactive wastes were given low priority, which led to increased accidents involving uncontrolled radiation sources. International guidance on clean-up criteria was lacking. Regional training centres needed to be strengthened to demonstrate techniques to process and store radioactive waste from the application of nuclear techniques in medicine, research and industry. In some countries, nuclear waste legislation had been delayed because of public opposition to waste repository sites. Renewed efforts were needed to complete the drafting of the convention on the safety of radioactive waste management.

Transboundary movement of wastes

The fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the 1989 Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal [YUN 1989, p. 420], scheduled to take place in October 1997, was postponed until February 1998.

The Ad Hoc Working Group of Legal and Technical Experts, a subsidiary body of the Conference of the Parties, at its fifth session (Geneva, 20-23 May) [UNEP/CHW.1/WG.1/5/5], made substantive progress on developing a draft protocol on liability and compensation for damage resulting from transboundary movements of hazardous wastes and their disposal. It considered articles relating to definitions, the scope of application, liability, forms of compensation, the possible establishment of a fund, State responsibility, and the relationship with other bilateral, multilateral and regional agreements.

Other matters

Environmental law

The UNEP Governing Council reviewed a report of the Executive Director [UNEP/GC.19/32] summarizing action taken by UNEP to implement the Council's 1993 decision concerning the Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law for the 1990s (Montevideo II) [YUN 1993, p. 820] and its 1995 decision concerning the further development of international environmental law aiming at sustainable

development [YUN 1995, p. 1088]. Montevideo I was adopted in 1981 [YUN 1981, p. 839].

UNEP had strengthened its activities for the further development of environmental law and had initiated work on identifying the general direction for the future development of international environmental law aiming at sustainable development. Progress had been made in developing international environmental law. At the national level, UNEP continued to provide legal advisory services in response to requests from developing countries for assistance in drawing up and strengthening environmental legislation and institutions. With a view to promoting wider appreciation of environmental law, UNEP continued to disseminate information to Governments and other parties active in environmental law. A series of expert group workshops and meetings was held on international environmental law aiming at sustainable development.

The Council also had before it a position paper [UNEP/GC.19/INF.12], which reviewed the current status of international environmental law as it related to achieving sustainable development. Priority areas for action included: implementation of and compliance with international environmental agreements; dispute avoidance and settlement procedures; liability and compensation; clarifying and further refining concepts and principles of international environmental law; analysing the relationship of international environmental law with other areas of law; increasing UNEP's cooperation with the World Trade Organization; creating and strengthening mechanisms for making information relating to international environmental obligations available to non-State actors; analysing the legal requirements and consequences of the integration of the secretariats of different environmental conventions resulting eventually in their amalgamation; and exploring the means to enhance cooperation at the local level on transboundary environmental matters.

On 7 February [A/52/25 (dec. 19/20)], the Council commended UNEP for its action to implement the Montevideo Programme II. It took note of the position paper and of a preliminary study on the need for and feasibility of new international environmental instruments aiming at sustainable development [UNEP/GC.19/INF.18], and endorsed the observations and recommendations made by the Meeting of Senior Government Officials Expert in Environmental Law for the Mid-term Review of the Programme [UNEP/GC.19/INF.14] on specific programme areas of the Montevideo Programme II. The Council asked the Executive Director to use them as guidance in further implementing

the Programme. It asked her to submit to the special session of the General Assembly, on its behalf, the observations and recommendations made by the Meeting of Senior Government Officials, indicating that they reflected the views of the Council on steps that should be taken to apply further the principles contained in the Rio Declaration [YUN 1992, p. 670], and to forward the Executive Director's mid-term report on implementation of the Programme [UNEP/GC.19/INF.13].

Occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories

The Executive Director submitted to the Governing Council a report on the state of the environment in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories [UNEP/GC.19/13]. Environmental assessment activities undertaken under the auspices of bilateral projects included the completion of the Gaza Environmental Profile by the Palestinian National Authority; the publication by Israel of a report on regional environmental cooperation and development options, which contained information on many environmental problems facing the Middle East, such as rapid development, population and urban growth, water shortages, desertification, pollution and the conservation of biological diversity; and the establishment of an environmental database for the West Bank at the Applied Research Institute (Jerusalem), supported by Austria.

Because of financial and other constraints, the role of UNEP in the Middle East multilateral peace process had been restricted to providing technical and other advisory services in those programmes of the multilateral working groups where it had been invited to participate as a partner. UNEP participated in the activities of the Multilateral Working Groups on Water Resources and on the Environment. It held a training course on project design and appraisal tools for integrated environmental and economic assessment, and provided technical support for Norway's activities in facilitating consensus-building on principles for cooperation among the core parties on water-related matters and new and additional water resources.

The Council, on 7 February [A/52/25 (dec. 19/8)], noted with concern that the Executive Director was unable to update the report on the environmental situation in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories, and asked her to complete the update as soon as possible. It also asked her to implement a 1993 Council decision [YUN 1993, p. 820], requesting her to provide technical assistance in Palestinian institutional and self-capacity-building in the environment. The Executive Director was asked to report in 1999.