

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).