Environment

With the global environment having grown worse than it was two decades previously, despite all efforts deployed, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992 adopted the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, seeking international agreements to protect the integrity of the global environmental and developmental systems. The Conference also adopted Agenda 21, reflecting a global consensus on development and environment cooperation, and a statement of principles on the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests. Two conventions—the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity—were opened for signature at UNCED and signed by 154 States and 156 States, respectively; each Convention was also signed by one regional economic integration organization.

UNCED coincided with World Environment Day (5 June), which was also the twentieth anniversary of the opening of the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment.

Representatives of 176 States and Territories (see APPENDIX III), the European Economic Community (EEC), Palestine and seven associate members of the regional commissions (American Samoa, Aruba, Hong Kong, Netherlands Antilles, Niue, Puerto Rico, United States Virgin Islands) attended the Conference. Two national liberation movements—the African National Congress and the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania—were represented, along with the secretariats of four of the regional commissions, several United Nations offices, organizations and specialized agencies, 35 intergovernmental organizations and some 1,500 non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The Conference elected as its President Fernando Collor, President of Brazil. Also elected were 39 Vice-Presidents, one ex-officio Vice-President from the host country, a Rapporteur-General and a Main Committee Chairman.

Action taken by the Conference

Rio Declaration on Environment and Development

The Rio Declaration aimed to establish a new and equitable global partnership on environment and development through cooperation among States, key sectors of society and individuals. It was hoped that the Declaration would serve as a basis for future negotiation of an Earth Charter that could be approved on the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations in 1995. The Declaration consisted of the following 27 principles:

1. Human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development. They are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature.
2. States have, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international
law, the sovereign right to exploit their own resources pursuant to their own environmental and developmental policies, and the responsibility to ensure that activities within their jurisdiction or control do not cause damage to the environment of other States or of areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction.

3. The right to development must be fulfilled so as to equitably meet developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations.

4. In order to achieve sustainable development, environmental protection shall constitute an integral part of the development process and cannot be considered in isolation from it.

5. All States and all people shall cooperate in the essential task of eradicating poverty as an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, in order to decrease the disparities in standards of living and better meet the needs of the majority of the people of the world.

6. The special situation and needs of developing countries, particularly the least developed and those most environmentally vulnerable, shall be given special priority. International actions in the field of environment and development should also address the interests and needs of all countries.

7. States shall cooperate in a spirit of global partnership to conserve, protect and restore the health and integrity of the Earth's ecosystem. In view of the different contributions to global environmental degradation, States have common but differentiated responsibilities. The developed countries acknowledge the responsibility that they bear in the international pursuit of sustainable development in view of the pressures their societies place on the global environment and of the technologies and financial resources they command.

8. To achieve sustainable development and a higher quality of life for all people, States should reduce and eliminate unsustainable patterns of production and consumption and promote appropriate demographic policies.

9. States should cooperate to strengthen endogenous capacity-building for sustainable development by improving scientific understanding through exchanges of scientific and technological knowledge, and by enhancing the development, adaptation, diffusion and transfer of technologies, including new and innovative technologies.

10. Environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level. At the national level, each individual shall have appropriate access to information concerning the environment that is held by public authorities, including information on hazardous materials and activities in their communities, and the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. States shall facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making information widely available. Effective access to judicial and administrative proceedings, including redress and remedy, shall be provided.

11. States shall enact effective environmental legislation. Environmental standards, management objectives and priorities should reflect the environmental and developmental context to which they apply. Standards applied by some countries may be inappropriate and of unwarranted economic and social cost to other countries, in particular developing countries.

12. States should cooperate to promote a supportive and open international economic system that would lead to economic growth and sustainable development in all countries, to better address the problems of environmental degradation. Trade policy measures for environmental purposes should not constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or a disguised restriction on international trade. Unilateral actions to deal with environmental challenges outside the jurisdiction of the importing country should be avoided. Environmental measures addressing transboundary or global environmental problems should, as far as possible, be based on an international consensus.

13. States shall develop national law regarding liability and compensation for the victims of pollution and other environmental damage. States shall also cooperate in an expeditious and more determined manner to develop further international law regarding liability and compensation for adverse effects of environmental damage caused by activities within their jurisdiction or control to areas beyond their jurisdiction.

14. States should effectively cooperate to discourage or prevent the relocation and transfer to other States of any activities and substances that cause severe environmental degradation or are found to be harmful to human health.

15. In order to protect the environment, the precautionary approach shall be widely applied by States according to their capabilities. Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation.

16. National authorities should endeavour to promote the internalization of environmental costs and the use of economic instruments, taking into account the approach that the polluter should, in principle, bear the cost of pollution, with due regard to the public interest and without distorting international trade and investment.

17. Environmental impact assessment, as a national instrument, shall be undertaken for proposed activities that are likely to have a significant adverse impact on the environment and are subject to a decision of a competent national authority.

18. States shall immediately notify other States of any natural disasters or other emergencies that are likely to produce sudden harmful effects on the environment of those States. Every effort shall be made by the international community to help States so afflicted.

19. States shall provide prior and timely notification and relevant information to potentially affected States on activities that may have a significant adverse transboundary environmental effect and shall consult with those States at an early stage and in good faith.

20. Women have a vital role in environmental management and development. Their full participation is therefore essential to achieve sustainable development.

21. The creativity, ideals and courage of the youth of the world should be mobilized to forge a global partnership in order to achieve sustainable development and ensure a better future for all.
22. Indigenous people and their communities and other local communities have a vital role in environmental management and development because of their knowledge and traditional practices. States should recognize and duly support their identity, culture and interests and enable their effective participation in the achievement of sustainable development.

23. The environment and natural resources of people under oppression, domination and occupation shall be protected.

24. Warfare is inherently destructive of sustainable development. States shall therefore respect international law providing protection for the environment in times of armed conflict and cooperate in its further development, as necessary.

25. Peace, development and environmental protection are interdependent and indivisible.

26. States shall resolve all their environmental disputes peacefully and by appropriate means in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

27. States and people shall cooperate in good faith and in a spirit of partnership in the fulfilment of the principles embodied in this declaration and in the further development of international law in the field of sustainable development.

Agenda 21

The preamble of Agenda 21 stated that humanity was confronted with a worsening of poverty, hunger, ill-health and illiteracy and the continuing deterioration of the ecosystems. Integration of environment and development concerns would lead to the fulfilment of basic needs, improved living standards for all, better protected and lead to the achievement of sustainable development.

The Conference declared that an environmental policy focusing on the conservation and protection of resources would have to take into account those who depended on the resources for their livelihoods. A development policy focusing on increasing the production of goods without addressing the sustainability of the resources on which production was based would run into declining productivity. The United Nations system should make poverty alleviation a major priority and assist Governments in formulating action programmes on poverty alleviation and sustainable development.

Changing consumption patterns in regard to natural resources would require a multipronged strategy focusing on demand, meeting the basic needs of the poor, and reducing wastage and the use of finite resources in the production process. Governments should assist individuals and households in making environmentally informed choices.

The Conference agreed that the growth in world population and production combined with unsustainable consumption practices was placing increasingly severe stress on the life-supporting capacities of the planet. Demographic trends should be incorporated in the global analysis of environment and development issues, with full recognition of women’s rights.

The Conference said that Agenda 21 should address the primary health needs of the world’s population. Countries were urged to develop priority action plans based on the cooperative efforts of various levels of government, NGOs and local communities. Programme areas relating to health dealt with meeting rural health-care needs, controlling communicable diseases, protecting vulnerable groups, meeting the urban health challenge and reducing health risks from environmental pollution and hazards.

On the subject of promoting sustainable human settlements, the Conference called for providing shelter for all, improved management of settlements, sustainable land-use planning and management, the integrated provision of environmental infrastructure (water, sanitation, drainage and solid-waste management), sustainable energy and transport systems, planning and management of settlements in disaster-prone areas, sustainable construction industry activities and human resource development and capacity-building for human settlement development.

Conservation and management of resources for development

Section II of Agenda 21 covered the conservation and management of resources for development. It included four programme areas: improv-
ing the scientific basis for decision-making; promoting sustainable development; preventing stratospheric ozone depletion; and transboundary atmospheric pollution.

The Conference called for an integrated approach to the planning and management of soils, minerals, water and biota. Noting major weaknesses in the policies, methods and mechanisms adopted to support and develop the ecological, economic, social and cultural roles of trees, forests and forest lands, it recommended the following: enhancing the protection, management and conservation of all forests, as well as the greening of degraded areas, through rehabilitation, afforestation, reforestation and other means; promoting efficient utilization and assessment to recover the full valuation of the goods and services provided by forests, forest lands and woodlands; and establishing or strengthening capacities for the planning, assessment and systematic observations of forests.

Three chapters dealt with managing fragile ecosystems: combating desertification and drought, mountain development, and sustaining small islands and coastal areas. Agenda 21 called for strengthening the desertification knowledge base, developing information and monitoring systems for regions prone to desertification and drought, combating land degradation and promoting alternative livelihood systems in areas prone to desertification. In addition, the Conference proposed integrating comprehensive anti-desertification programmes into national development and environmental plans, developing comprehensive drought preparedness and drought-relief schemes for drought-prone areas, designing programmes to cope with environmental refugees and promoting education on desertification control and management of the effects of drought. The Conference called for the General Assembly to establish an intergovernmental negotiating committee to elaborate an international convention to combat desertification in countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification.

Mountains were susceptible to accelerated erosion, landslides and rapid loss of habitat and genetic diversity. Programme areas covered strengthening knowledge about the ecology and sustainable development of mountain ecosystems and promoting integrated watershed development and alternative livelihood opportunities.

The protection and development of the marine environment, including the oceans, seas and adjacent coastal areas, was to be carried out in accordance with the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Agenda 21 called for the integrated management and sustainable development of coastal areas, including exclusive economic zones; marine environmental protection; the sustainable use and conservation of marine living resources; addressing critical uncertainties for the management of the marine environment and climate change; strengthening international cooperation and coordination; and the sustainable development of small islands. It identified small island developing States as a special case for both environment and development, given their vulnerability to global warming and sea-level rise, as well as their degree of biodiversity. The Conference called for a global conference on the sustainable development of island States and for an intergovernmental conference on straddling and highly migratory fish stocks (see below).

To protect the quality and supply of freshwater resources, the Conference proposed the following programme areas: integrated water resources development and management; water resources assessment; protection of water resources, water quality and aquatic ecosystems; drinking-water supply and sanitation; water and sustainable urban development; water for sustainable food production and rural development; and impacts of climate change on water resources.

In relation to promoting sustainable agriculture and rural development, the Conference stated that by the year 2025, 83 per cent of the expected global population of 8.5 billion would be living in developing countries. Major adjustments were needed in agricultural, environmental and macroeconomic policy to create sustainable agriculture and rural development. Agenda 21 included the following programme areas, among others: agricultural policy review, planning and integrated programming; human resource development for sustainable agriculture; improving of farm production and farming systems through diversification of farm and non-farm employment and infrastructure development; land-resource planning information and education for agriculture; land conservation and rehabilitation; and water for food production and rural development.

Regarding the conservation of biological diversity, the Conference observed that the planet’s essential goods and services depended on the variety and variability of genes, species, populations and ecosystems. In its view, the current decline in biodiversity was largely the result of human activity and represented a serious threat to human development. Agenda 21 sought to improve the conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable use of biological resources, and to support the Convention on Biological Diversity (see below).

The Conference considered the environmentally sound management of toxic chemicals. It proposed six programme areas: expanding international assessment of chemical risks; harmonization of classification and labelling of chemicals; information exchange on toxic chemicals and chemical risks;
establishment of risk-reduction programmes; strengthening of national capacities for management of chemicals; and prevention of illegal international traffic in toxic and dangerous products.

With respect to hazardous wastes, countries were urged to ratify the 1989 Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal and the 1991 Bamako Convention on the Ban of the Import of All Forms of Hazardous Wastes into Africa and the Control of Transboundary Movements of Such Wastes Generated in Africa.

For safe and environmentally sound management of radioactive wastes, the Conference said that States, in cooperation with international organizations, should limit the generation of such wastes; support efforts within the International Atomic Energy Agency to develop radioactive-waste safety standards or guidelines and codes of practice; and promote safe storage, transportation and disposal of radioactive wastes, and proper planning of their management, including emergency procedures.

Strengthening the role of major groups

The third section of Agenda 21 dealt with strengthening the role of various groups in implementing its objectives and policies. The commitment and involvement of all social groups was seen as critical to the success of the programmes. Among the groups addressed were women, children and youth, indigenous people, NGOs, local authorities, workers and trade unions, business and industry, the scientific and technological community, and farmers.

Means of implementation

The fourth and final section of Agenda 21 discussed means of financing its programmes. The Conference secretariat estimated that the average cost of implementing Agenda 21 in developing countries between 1993 and 2000 would exceed $600 billion per year, including $125 billion on grant or concessional terms from the international community.

The Conference stated that for developing countries, official development assistance (ODA) was a main source of external funding; substantial new funding would be required. Developed countries reaffirmed their commitment to reach the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product for ODA. All available funding sources would be used, including multilateral development banks, the Global Environment Facility (see below), specialized agencies and other United Nations bodies, multilateral institutions, bilateral assistance programmes, debt relief and private funding.

The intergovernmental follow-up to the Conference was to take place within the framework of the United Nations system, with the General Assembly being the principal policy-making and appraisal organ. The Assembly would organize a regular review of the implementation of Agenda 21, and could consider holding a special session for that purpose not later than 1997. The Economic and Social Council would oversee the system-wide coordination and integration of environmental and developmental aspects of United Nations policies and programmes. The Conference recommended the creation of a high-level Commission on Sustainable Development to ensure effective follow-up (see below). The Commission, which would report to the Council, would enhance international cooperation, examine progress in implementing Agenda 21 at the national, regional and international levels, provide for the active involvement of organs, programmes and organizations of the United Nations system, international financial institutions and other intergovernmental organizations, and encourage the participation of NGOs.

Statement of Principles on forests

The Non-legally Binding Authoritative Statement of Principles for a Global Consensus on the Management, Conservation and Sustainable Development of All Types of Forests declared that States had the sovereign right to utilize, manage and develop their forests, including the right to convert them to other uses, in accordance with their own development needs and level of socioeconomic development. Governments were urged to manage their forest resources and lands so as to meet the social, economic, ecological, cultural and spiritual needs of current and future generations for wood, water, food, fodder, medicine, fuel, shelter, employment, recreation, wildlife habitats, landscape diversity, carbon reservoirs and other forest products.

The Statement called on Governments to recognize that forests played a vital role in protecting fragile ecosystems and water resources, were sources of genetic material for biotechnology products and met energy requirements. In addition, all countries, notably developed countries, were urged to take action towards reforestation, afforestation and forest conservation.

Representative or unique examples of forests that were ecologically viable should be protected, while access to biological resources, including genetic material, should be provided with due regard for the sovereign rights of the countries where the forests were located.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 22 December, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Second (Economic and Financial) Committee, adopted resolution 47/190 without vote.

The General Assembly,


Having considered the report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development,

Expressing its satisfaction that the Conference and its Preparatory Committee provided for the active participation of all States Members of the United Nations and of observers and various intergovernmental organizations, as well as of non-governmental organizations representing all the regions of the world,

Reaffirming the need for a balanced and integrated approach to environment and development issues,

Reaffirming also a new global partnership for sustainable development.

Expressing its profound gratitude to the Government and the people of Brazil for the hospitality extended to the participants of the Conference and for the facilities, staff and services placed at their disposal,


3. Notes with satisfaction that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity were opened for signature and were signed by a large number of States at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, and stresses the need for these Conventions to come into force as soon as possible;

4. Urges Governments and organs, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system, as well as other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, to take the necessary action to give effective follow-up to the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, Agenda 21 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;

5. calls upon all concerned to implement all commitments, agreements and recommendations reached at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, especially by ensuring provision of the means of implementation under section IV of Agenda 21, stressing in particular the importance of financial resources and mechanisms, the transfer of environmentally sound technology, cooperation and capacity-building, and international institutional arrangements, in order to achieve sustainable development in all countries;

6. Takes note with appreciation of the initial financial commitments made at its forty-seventh session by some developed countries and urges those countries which have not done so to announce their commitments in accordance with paragraph 33.19 of Agenda 21;

7. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-eighth and subsequent sessions an item entitled "Implementation of decisions and recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development";

8. Also decides to convene, not later than 1997, a special session for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of Agenda 21 and, in this context, requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session a report containing recommendations for consideration by the Assembly on the format, scope and organizational aspects of such a special session.

General Assembly resolution 47/190

22 December 1992 Meeting 93 Adopted without vote

Approved by Second Committee (A/47/719) without vote, 16 December (meeting 51), draft by Malaysia (A/C.2/47/L.51); agenda item 79

The Assembly, by resolution 47/189, decided to convene a global conference on the sustainable development of small island developing States, as called for in Agenda 21. The conference was to be held in Barbados in 1994.

Preparations for UNCED

The UNCED Preparatory Committee held its fourth session in 1992 (New York, 2 March-3 April)(6) to finalize the proposals to be submitted to UNCED. The Committee adopted decisions allowing the participation of NGOs and observers at UNCED; appealing for contributions to facilitate the participation of developing countries; and adopting draft chapters of Agenda 21, the Statement of Principles on forests and the Rio Declaration. It also made recommendations to the General Assembly regarding the dates of the Conference, observer status for associate members of regional commissions, the status of EEC at UNCED and draft provisional rules of procedure of the Conference.

On 7 April(7) the Secretary-General transmitted the four decisions containing those recommendations to the Assembly for action.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 13 April 1992, the Assembly adopted the four decisions recommended by the UNCED Preparatory Committee. Noting that the Moslem Feast of Eid-Al-Adha would start on 10 or 11 June, the Assembly, by decision 46/468, changed the dates of UNCED from 1 to 12 June 1992 to 3 to 14 June, with pre-session consultations to take place on 1 and 2 June. By decision 46/469, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to invite associate members of regional commissions to participate in the Conference as observers and amended the draft provisional rules accordingly. By decision 46/470, the Assembly amended the rules to allow EEC to participate fully in the Conference and, by decision 46/471, revised the rule relating to the election of Conference officers.
Other action. Also in preparation for UNCED, the Department of Public Information implemented a system-wide information programme, described in a January report of the Secretary-General(8) submitted to the Committee on Information in response to a 1991 request of the Assembly.(9)

In other action, the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) held its third special session (Nairobi, Kenya, 3-5 February)(10) to consider reports to be submitted to UNCED concerning the state of the environment,(11) desertification(12) and follow-up to previous Assembly resolutions on sustainable development.(13)


The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), in the report on its eighth session (see Part Three, Chapter IV), stressed the importance of UNCED and affirmed its readiness to participate in the follow-up process.

Follow-up to the Conference

Institutional arrangements

In October, the Secretary-General submitted a report to the General Assembly on institutional arrangements to follow up UNCED,(14) which had recommended an institutional structure aimed at ensuring the implementation of Agenda 21. The Secretary-General discussed proposals related to the organization of a high-level Commission on Sustainable Development, inter-agency coordination arrangements, the role of a high-level advisory board on sustainable development, and the secretariat support structure. In an addendum, the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) offered its views on those institutional arrangements.

In December,(15) the Secretary-General announced the future establishment in New York of a Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 22 December, on the recommendation of the Second Committee, the Assembly adopted without vote resolution 47/191.

Institutional arrangements to follow up the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

The General Assembly,

Welcoming the adoption by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development of Agenda 21, in particular chapter 38, entitled “International institutional arrangements”, which contains a set of important recommendations on institutional arrangements to follow up the Conference,

Stressing the overall objective of the integration of environment and development issues at the national, subregional, regional and international levels, including the United Nations system institutional arrangements, and the specific objectives recommended by the Conference in paragraph 38.8 of Agenda 21,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General, prepared with the assistance of the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, on institutional arrangements to follow up the Conference, as well as the recommendations and proposals contained therein,

1. Endorses the recommendations on institutional arrangements to follow up the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development as contained in chapter 38 of Agenda 21, particularly those on the establishment of a high-level Commission on Sustainable Development;

2. Requests the Economic and Social Council, at its organizational session for 1993, to set up a high-level Commission on Sustainable Development as a functional commission of the Council, in accordance with Article 68 of the Charter of the United Nations, in order to ensure effective follow-up to the Conference, as well as to enhance international cooperation and rationalize the intergovernmental decision-making capacity for the integration of environment and development issues and to examine the progress of the implementation of Agenda 21 at the national, regional and international levels, fully guided by the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and all other aspects of the Conference, in order to achieve sustainable development in all countries;

3. Recommends that the Commission have the following functions, as agreed in paragraphs 38.13, 33.13 and 33.21 of Agenda 21:

(a) To monitor progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 and activities related to the integration of environmental and developmental goals throughout the United Nations system through analysis and evaluation of reports from all relevant organs, organizations, programmes and institutions of the United Nations system dealing with various issues of environment and development, including those related to finance;

(b) To consider information provided by Governments, for example, in the form of periodic communications or national reports regarding the activities they undertake to implement Agenda 21, the problems they face, such as problems related to financial resources and technology transfer, and other environment and development issues they find relevant;

(c) To review the progress in the implementation of the commitments set forth in Agenda 21, including those related to the provision of financial resources and transfer of technology;

(d) To review and monitor regularly progress towards the United Nations target of 0.7 per cent of the gross national product of developed countries for official development assistance; this review process should systematically combine the monitoring of the implemen-
tation of Agenda 21 with the review of financial resources available;

(e) To review on a regular basis the adequacy of funding and mechanisms, including efforts to reach the objectives agreed in chapter 33 of Agenda 21, including targets where applicable;

(f) To receive and analyse relevant input from competent non-governmental organizations, including the scientific and the private sector, in the context of the overall implementation of Agenda 21;

(g) To enhance the dialogue, within the framework of the United Nations, with non-governmental organizations and the independent sector, as well as other entities outside the United Nations system;

(h) To consider, where appropriate, information regarding the progress made in the implementation of environmental conventions, which could be made available by the relevant conferences of parties;

(i) To provide appropriate recommendations to the General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, on the basis of an integrated consideration of the reports and issues related to the implementation of Agenda 21;

(j) To consider, at an appropriate time, the results of the review to be conducted expeditiously by the Secretary-General of all recommendations of the Conference for capacity-building programmes, information networks, task forces and other mechanisms to support the integrated implementation of Agenda 21, in particular in the context of the review of the implementation of chapter 11 thereof;

4. Also recommends that the Commission:

(a) Promote the incorporation of the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development in the implementation of Agenda 21;

(b) Promote the incorporation of the Non-legally Binding Authoritative Statement of Principles for a Global Consensus on the Management, Conservation and Sustainable Development of All Types of Forests in the implementation of Agenda 21, in particular in the context of the review of the implementation of chapter 11 thereof;

(c) Keep under review the implementation of Agenda 21, recognizing that it is a dynamic programme that could evolve over time, taking into account the agenda item 11 of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development 1997, and make recommendations, as appropriate, on the need for new cooperative arrangements related to sustainable development to the Economic and Social Council and, through it, to the General Assembly;

5. Decides that the Commission, in the fulfilment of its functions, will also:

(a) Monitor progress in promoting, facilitating and financing, as appropriate, access to and transfer of environmentally sound technologies and corresponding know-how, in particular to developing countries, on favourable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed, taking into account the need to protect intellectual property rights as well as the special needs of developing countries for the implementation of Agenda 21;

(b) Consider issues related to the provision of financial resources from all available funding sources and mechanisms, as contained in paragraphs 33.13 to 33.16 of Agenda 21;

6. Recommends that the Commission consist of representatives of fifty-three States elected by the Economic and Social Council from among the Members of the United Nations and members of its specialized agencies for three-year terms, with due regard to equitable geographical distribution; the regional allocation of seats could be the same as that of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, as decided by the Economic and Social Council in its decision 1992/222 of 29 May 1992; representation should be at a high level, including ministerial participation; other Members of the United Nations and members of its specialized agencies, as well as other observers of the United Nations, may participate in the Commission in the capacity of observer, in accordance with established practice;

7. Also recommends that the Commission:

(a) Provide for representatives of various parts of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations, including international financial institutions, GATT, regional development banks, subregional financial institutions, relevant regional and subregional economic and technical cooperation organizations and regional economic integration organizations, to assist and advise the Commission in the performance of its functions, within their respective areas of expertise and mandates, and participate actively in its deliberations; and provide for the European Community, within its areas of competence, to participate fully—as will be appropriately defined in the rules of procedure applicable to the Commission—without the right to vote;

(b) Provide for non-governmental organizations, including those related to major groups as well as to industry and the scientific and business communities, to participate effectively in its work and contribute within their areas of competence to its deliberations;

8. Requests the Secretary-General, in the light of paragraph 7 above, to submit, for the consideration of the Economic and Social Council at its organizational session for 1993, his proposals on the rules of procedure applicable to the Commission, including those related to participation of relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, as recommended by the Conference, taking into account the following:

(a) The procedures, while ensuring the intergovernmental nature of the Commission, should allow its members to benefit from the expertise and competence of relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations;

(b) The procedures should permit relevant intergovernmental organizations inside and outside the United Nations system, including multilateral financial institutions, to appoint special representatives to the Commission;

(c) The rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council and those of its functional commissions;

(d) The rules of procedure of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development;

(e) Decisions 1/1 and 2/1 of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development;

(f) Paragraphs 38.11 and 38.44 of Agenda 21;

9. Recommends that the Commission shall meet once a year for a period of two to three weeks; the first substantive session of the Commission will be held in New York in 1993, without prejudice to the venue of future sessions at Geneva and/or in New York;

10. Requests the Committee on Conferences to consider the need for readjusting the calendar of meetings
in order to take account of the interrelationship between the work of the Commission and the work of other relevant United Nations intergovernmental subsidiary organs, in order to ensure timely reporting to the Economic and Social Council;

11. Recommends that in 1993, as a transitional measure, the Commission hold a short organizational session in New York; at that session, the Commission will elect the officers of the Commission, namely, a chairman, three vice-chairmen and a rapporteur, one from each of the regional groups, decide on the agenda of its first substantive session and consider all other organizational issues as may be necessary; the agenda of the organizational session of the Commission shall be decided on by the Economic and Social Council at its organizational session for 1993;

12. Also recommends that the Commission, at its first substantive session, adopt a multi-year thematic programme of its work that will provide a framework to assess progress achieved in the implementation of Agenda 21 and ensure an integrated approach to all of its environment and development components as well as linkages between sectoral and cross-sectoral issues; this programme could be of clusters that would integrate in an effective manner related sectoral and cross-sectoral components of Agenda 21 in such a way as to allow the Commission to review the progress of the implementation of the entire Agenda 21 by 1997; the programme of work could be adjusted, as the need arises, at subsequent sessions of the Commission;

13. Requests the Secretary-General to submit his proposals for such a programme of work during the organizational session of the Commission;

14. Recommends that in order to carry out its functions and implement its programme of work effectively the Commission consider organizing its work on the following lines:

(a) Financial resources, mechanisms, transfer of technology, capacity-building and other cross-sectoral issues;

(b) Review of the implementation of Agenda 21 at the international level, as well as at the regional and national levels, including the means of implementation, in accordance with paragraph 12 above and the functions of the Commission, taking into account, where appropriate, information regarding progress in the implementation of relevant environmental conventions;

(c) A high-level meeting, with ministerial participation, to have an integrated overview of the implementation of Agenda 21, to consider emerging policy issues and to provide necessary political impetus to the implementation of the decisions of the Conference and the commitments contained therein;

Review and consideration of the implementation of Agenda 21 should be in an integrated manner;

15. Requests the Secretary-General to provide for each session of the Commission, in accordance with the programme of work mentioned in paragraph 12 above and with its organizational modalities, analytical reports containing information on relevant activities to implement Agenda 21, progress achieved and emerging issues to be addressed;

16. Also requests the Secretary-General to prepare, for the first substantive session of the Commission, reports containing information and proposals, as appropriate, on the following issues:

(a) Initial financial commitments, financial flows and arrangements to give effect to the decisions of the Conference from all available funding sources and mechanisms;

(b) Progress achieved in facilitating and promoting transfer of environmentally sound technologies, cooperation and capacity-building;

(c) Progress in the incorporation of recommendations of the Conference in the activities of international organizations and measures undertaken by the Administrative Committee on Coordination to ensure that sustainable development principles are incorporated into programmes and processes within the United Nations system;

(d) Ways in which, upon request, the United Nations system and bilateral donors are assisting countries, particularly developing countries, in the preparation of national reports and national Agenda 21 action plans;

17. Decides that organizational modalities for the Commission should be reviewed in the context of the overall review and appraisal of Agenda 21 during the special session of the General Assembly and adjusted, as may be required, to improve its effectiveness;

Relationship with other United Nations intergovernmental bodies

18. Recommends that the Commission, in discharging its functions, submit its consolidated recommendations to the Economic and Social Council and, through it, to the General Assembly, to be considered by the Council and the Assembly in accordance with their respective responsibilities as defined in the Charter of the United Nations and with the relevant provisions of paragraphs 38.9 and 38.10 of Agenda 21;

19. Also recommends that the Commission actively interact with other intergovernmental United Nations bodies dealing with matters related to environment and development;

20. Emphasizes that the ongoing restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields should take into account the organizational modalities for the Commission, with a view to optimizing its work and the work of other intergovernmental United Nations bodies dealing with matters related to environment and development;

Coordination within the United Nations system

21. Requests all specialized agencies and related organizations of the United Nations system to strengthen and adjust their activities, programmes and medium-term plans, as appropriate, in line with Agenda 21, in particular regarding projects for promoting sustainable development, in accordance with paragraph 38.28 of Agenda 21, and make their reports on steps they have taken to give effect to this recommendation available to the Commission and the Economic and Social Council in 1993 or, at the latest, in 1994, in accordance with Article 64 of the Charter;

22. Invites all relevant governing bodies to ensure that the tasks assigned to them are carried out effectively, including the elaboration and publication on a regular basis of reports on the activities of the organs, programmes and organizations for which they are responsible, and that continuous reviews are undertaken of their policies, programmes, budgets and activities;
23. Invites the World Bank and other international, regional and subregional financial and development institutions, including the Global Environment Facility, to submit regularly to the Commission reports containing information on their experience, activities and plans to implement Agenda 21;

24. Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission, at its substantive session of 1993, recommendations and proposals for improving coordination of programmes related to development data that exist within the United Nations system, taking into account the provisions of paragraph 40.13 of Agenda 21, inter alia regarding “Development Watch”;

25. Requests the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme, the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme and the Trade and Development Board to examine the relevant provisions of chapter 38 of Agenda 21 at their next sessions and to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session, through the Commission and the Economic and Social Council, reports on their specific plans to implement Agenda 21;

26. Takes note of the work of the United Nations Centre for Urgent Environmental Assistance, established by the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on an experimental basis, and invites the Governing Council to report to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session on the experience gained within the Centre;

Regional commissions

27. Requests United Nations regional commissions to examine the relevant provisions of chapter 38 of Agenda 21 at their next sessions and to submit reports on their specific plans to implement Agenda 21;

28. Requests the Economic and Social Council to decide on the arrangements required for the reports of regional commissions with the conclusions related to such a review to be made available to the Commission on Sustainable Development in 1993, or at the latest in 1994;

High-level Advisory Board

29. Endorses the view of the Secretary-General that the High-level Advisory Board should consist of eminent persons broadly representative of all regions of the world, with recognized expertise on the broad spectrum of issues to be dealt with by the Commission, drawn from relevant scientific disciplines, industry, finance and other major non-governmental constituencies, as well as various disciplines related to environment and development, and that due account should also be given to gender balance;

30. Decides that the main task of the Advisory Board is to give broad consideration to issues related to implementation of Agenda 21, taking into account the thematic multi-year programme of work of the Commission, and provide expert advice in that regard to the Secretary-General and, through him, to the Commission, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly;

31. Takes note of the views of the Secretary-General regarding the functions of the Advisory Board and of the Committee for Development Planning, and requests him to submit appropriate proposals to the Economic and Social Council at its organizational session for 1993, including the possibility of establishing rosters of experts;

Secretariat support arrangements

32. Takes note of the decision of the Secretary-General to establish a new Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, headed at the Under-Secretary-General level, and in this context calls upon the Secretary-General to establish a clearly identifiable, highly qualified and competent secretariat support structure to provide support for the Commission, the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development and the High-level Advisory Board, taking into account gender balance at all levels, the paramount importance of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity, and the importance of recruiting staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible in accordance with Articles 8 and 101 of the Charter and the following criteria:

(a) It should draw on the expertise gained and the working methods and organizational structures developed during the preparatory process for the Conference;

(b) It should work closely with United Nations and other expert bodies in the field of sustainable development and should cooperate closely and cooperatively with the economic and social entities of the Secretariat and the secretariats of the relevant organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, including the secretariats of international financial institutions, and it should provide for effective liaison with relevant non-governmental organizations, including those related to major groups, in particular non-governmental organizations from developing countries;

(c) The secretariat, which will be located in New York, should ensure to all countries easy access to its services and effective interaction with secretariats of other international organizations, financial institutions and relevant conventions whose secretariats have been established definitively or on an interim basis, and should have a relevant office at Geneva to establish close links with activities related to follow-up to legal instruments signed at or mandated by the Conference and to maintain liaison with agencies in the fields of environment and development; the secretariat should also have a liaison office at Nairobi, on the basis of arrangements made at the Conference;

(d) It should be headed by a high-level official designated by the Secretary-General to work closely and directly with him and with assured access to him, as well as with the heads of relevant organizations of the United Nations system, including the multilateral financial and trade organizations, dealing with the implementation of Agenda 21;

(e) It should be funded from the United Nations regular budget and depend to the maximum extent possible upon existing budgetary resources;

(f) It should be supplemented or reinforced, as appropriate, by secondments from other relevant bodies and agencies of the United Nations system, especially the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank, taking into account the need to ensure that
the work programmes of those organizations are not negatively affected, and from national Governments, as well as by appropriate specialists on limited-term contracts from outside the United Nations in such areas as may be required:

(g) It should take into account relevant resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council regarding women in the United Nations Secretariat;

(h) Sustainable development should be integrated and coordinated with other economic, social and environmental activities of the Secretariat; organizational decisions should be consistent with consensus resolutions in the context of the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields;

33. Requests the Secretary-General to make the necessary interim secretariat arrangements to ensure adequate preparations and support for the first session of the Commission and the work of the Inter-Agency Committee;

34. Also requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session on the implementation of the present resolution.

General Assembly resolution 47/191

22 December 1992 Meeting 93 Adopted without vote

Approved by Second Committee (A/47/719) without vote, 16 December (meeting 51); draft by Malaysia (A/C.2/47/L.61), orally revised; agenda item 79.


Meeting numbers. GA 47th session: 2nd Committee 51; 5th Committee 49; plenary 93.

The Secretary-General estimated that resolution 47/191 would entail an expenditure of $1.8 million for 1993.

Capacity-building

In an April 1992 report to the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP),(16) the UNDP Administrator outlined a programme of support to developing countries as part of the planned follow-up to UNEC. UNDP, through its field offices, would organize United Nations capacity-building efforts, mobilize donor resources on behalf of Governments for capacity-building, assist countries in identifying and mobilizing domestic financial resources, raise awareness of the role of women and promote the participation of all parts of society, particularly NGOs and the private sector. UNDP support for Agenda 21 would focus on helping developing countries to prepare national sustainable development strategies and on building capacities for sustainable development.

On 26 May,(17) taking into account the report of the Joint Inspection Unit assessing the environmental focus of projects financed by UNDP and other agencies,(18) the Governing Council requested the Administrator to assist developing countries in strengthening their capacity to formulate and implement policies and programmes for sustainable development.

During the year, UNDP launched an initiative known as Capacity 21, which, according to the Administrator,(19) would complement existing programmes and be used to facilitate the integration of environmental considerations in all programmes. A goal of $100 million had been set for the pilot phase of the programme.(20)

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 22 December, on the recommendation of the Second Committee, the Assembly adopted resolution 47/194 without vote.

Capacity-building for Agenda 21

The General Assembly,

Welcoming the adoption by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development of Agenda 21, in particular chapter 37 thereof, which contains a set of important recommendations on capacity-building,

Noting with interest the launching by the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme of the “Capacity 21” initiative,

1. Invites the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme, taking into account the national policies, priorities and plans of recipient countries, to give due consideration to the adoption of concrete programmes and measures to implement Agenda 21 recommendations on capacity-building through, inter alia the “Capacity 21” initiative, with a view to promoting early action in support of developing countries, in particular the least developed countries in the area of capacity-building;

2. Invites all relevant United Nations agencies, within their mandates, to promote early action to implement the provisions of chapter 37 of Agenda 21;

3. Requests the Commission on Sustainable Development, in execution of its mandate, to give urgent consideration to the implementation of the provisions of Agenda 21 on capacity-building.

General Assembly resolution 47/194

22 December 1992 Meeting 93 Adopted without vote

Approved by Second Committee (A/47/719) without vote, 16 December (meeting 51); draft by Malaysia (A/C.2/47/64); agenda item 79.

Coordination within the UN system

In a November report to the UNEP Governing Council,(21) ACC reported that the Secretary-General had established an Inter-Agency Task Force on Environment and Development, composed of the Executive Heads of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Health Organization, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the World Bank, UNDP and UNEP, with UNCED invited to attend as an ex-officio member. The Task Force submitted to ACC recommendations relating to the allocation and sharing of responsibilities of the United Nations system stemming from Agenda 21.
ACC, in October, established an Inter-Agency Committee for Sustainable Development, comprising the member organizations of the Task Force and two additional organizations to be designated by the Secretary-General.

REFERENCES

General aspects

Sustainable development

In April,(1) the Secretary-General, in response to a 1989 General Assembly resolution,(2) submitted a report on the follow-up to two 1987 resolutions dealing with sustainable development. One of the resolutions(3) had established a framework for the achievement of environmentally sound development, and the other(4) had emphasized the need for sustainable development.

In preparing the report, the Executive Director of UNEP, on behalf of the Secretary-General, had requested information from Governments and United Nations organizations on implementation of the two resolutions. In all, 38 countries and 28 United Nations bodies replied. The report concluded that while progress had been made, it was limited and uneven in relation to what was needed, and would remain so unless the structural aspects of the state of the world’s environment and development received the attention of political leaders. Necessary structural changes included adjustments in the composition and distribution of production and consumption, population control, adjustments in international economic relations, alleviation of poverty and improvement of the quality and means of governance to minimize waste and injustice and maximize the creative involvement of people.

The UNEP Governing Council, on 5 February,(5) had taken note of an earlier version of the report(6) and called on Governments to devote more attention to achieving sustainable development and to allocate the necessary resources. It requested the Executive Director to report to the Council on the implementation of the decision in 1993.

The Economic and Social Council, on 31 July, by decision 1992/296, and the General Assembly, on 22 December, by decision 47/444, took note of the Secretary-General’s report.

In other action, the Council, by decision 1992/252, approved the preparation of a progress report on human rights and the environment by a Special Rapporteur (see PART THREE, Chapter X).

UNCTAD action. In August,(7) the UNCTAD secretariat submitted to the Trade and Development Board a report on sustainable development, including UNCTAD’s contribution to the implementation of UNCED’s conclusions and recommendations. The report covered cross-sectoral issues, including policy principles, tradeable permits and poverty, and sectoral links, including commodities, industry and other sectors, energy policy and tradeable emission entitlements and the promotion of environmentally sound technologies.

International conventions

Climate change convention

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change(8) was opened for signature on 4 June. During the year it was signed by 158 States and EEC, and ratified by nine States.(9) The Convention was to remain open for signing in New York from 20 June 1992 to 19 June 1993. It would enter into force on the ninetieth day after the date of deposit of the fiftieth instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession.

The objective of the Convention was to stabilize atmospheric concentrations of “greenhouse gases”, which absorbed and re-emitted infrared radiation, at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. Developed countries and countries undergoing transition to a market economy were to set a goal of limiting the emission of greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide, to 1990 levels. The developed countries were to provide financial and technological resources to the developing countries to assist them in implementing the Convention. The Convention defined a mechanism for providing financial resources on a grant or concessional basis through the Global Environment Facility (see below).

All parties to the Convention were to report periodically on national inventories of anthropogenic emissions and to cooperate in the development of processes that controlled them.

The Convention was drafted by an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, which was open to all United Nations Members or members of the specialized agencies, established pursuant to a 1990 General Assembly mandate.(10) One hundred and
fifty-seven countries, including 118 developing countries, participated in the negotiations.

The Committee held its fifth session in two parts (New York, 18-28 February and 30 April-9 May), in accordance with a 1991 Assembly resolution, to finalize the drafting of the Convention, which it adopted on 9 May.

In June, the Chairman of the Committee, pursuant to a 1990 Assembly request, submitted a report to the results of the Committee’s negotiations, for early entry into force of the Convention.

In October, the Secretary-General, pursuant to a 1991 Assembly resolution, submitted a report to UNCED, for early entry into force of the Convention.

The Committee held its sixth session at Geneva (7-10 December) to prepare for the first session of the Conference of the Parties and to draw up an interim work plan.

Voluntary funds. A review of the two funds established pursuant to a 1990 Assembly resolution—the special voluntary fund to support the participation of developing countries and the trust fund for the negotiating process—stated that, as at 18 November, contributions to assist developing countries totalled about $3 million. Contributions received or pledged towards support of the negotiating process stood at about $420,000.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 22 December, the General Assembly adopted resolution 47/195 without vote.

Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 43/53 of 6 December 1988 and 44/207 of 22 December 1989, in which it recognized climate change as a common concern of mankind,

Recalling also its resolutions 45/212 of 21 December 1990, by which it established an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to prepare an effective framework convention on climate change, and any related legal instruments as might be agreed upon, for signature during the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, and 46/169 of 19 December 1991, by which it provided for the continuation of work on climate change until the end of 1992,

Taking note with appreciation of the reports of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Framework Convention on Climate Change on its work up to May 1992 and the report prepared on behalf of the Committee, by its Chairman, for submission to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development,

Taking note of resolution 15(1) adopted by the Executive Council of the World Meteorological Organization at its forty-fourth session,

Noting that, in accordance with paragraph 4 of its resolution 46/169 and pursuant to resolution INC/1992/1 adopted by the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on 9 May 1992, arrangements were made for the sixth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee,

Noting also that the sixth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee was held at Geneva from 7 to 10 December 1992,

Noting further the interim arrangements contained in article 21 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, including the provision that the secretariat established by the General Assembly in resolution 45/212 should be the interim secretariat of the Convention until the completion of the first session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention,

Noting with appreciation the support provided for the operation of the secretariat during 1992 by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Meteorological Organization, as well as by bilateral contributors,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General, with particular reference to the possible requirements for intergovernmental and secretariat work on the implementation of the Convention in the period up to and including the first session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention,

1. Welcomes the adoption, on 9 May 1992, of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change by the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Framework Convention on Climate Change and its signing by a large number of States;
2. Considers the Convention one of the achievements of the international community working through the United Nations and a first step in a cooperative response to the common concern for the change in the Earth’s climate and its adverse effects;
3. Calls upon States that have not done so to sign or accede to the Convention, as appropriate, and all signatories that have not yet done so to ratify, accept or approve it, so that it may enter into force;
4. Invites signatories of the Convention to communicate to the head of the interim secretariat of the Convention, as soon as feasible, information regarding measures consistent with the provisions of the Convention, pending its entry into force;
5. Urges States to support and contribute to the activities at the national, subregional, regional and international levels related to the basic scientific and technical needs specified in the Convention, including those activities carried out under the World Climate Programme and the Global Climate Observing System;
6. Decides that the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee shall continue to function in order to prepare for the first session of the Conference of the Parties, as specified in the Convention, and, in that context, to contribute to the effective operation of the interim arrangements set out in article 21 of the Convention;
7. Invites the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, in this regard, to implement expeditiously the plan of preparatory work drawn up at its sixth session, and requests the Secretary-General to make arrangements within the overall calendar of conferences for the
Committee to hold sessions, in accordance with the needs of that plan;
8. Requests the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to promote a coherent and coordinated programme of activities by competent bodies aimed at supporting the entry into force and effective implementation of the Convention, including strengthening the capacities of developing and all other countries to prepare for their participation in the Convention;
9. Calls upon the organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system involved in work relating to climate change, including the interim secretariat of the Convention, to initiate and strengthen such activities, where possible in collaboration with each other, and invites them to make information on these activities and on any coordination arrangements regularly available to the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, through its secretariat;
10. Invites the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to convey information on its work to the General Assembly, as well as to the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on Sustainable Development, as appropriate, in particular in the context of chapter 9 of Agenda 21;
11. Requests the Secretary-General to strengthen the secretariat established by the General Assembly in its resolution 45/212 so that it may function as the interim secretariat of the Convention until the completion of the first session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and, in that capacity, provide adequate support to the evolving work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, and also requests him to make provisions for this purpose within the current and forthcoming programme budgets;
12. Invites the United Nations Environment Programme, the World Meteorological Organization and other United Nations bodies with relevant expertise, to continue to cooperate closely with, and to contribute staff to assist, the head of the interim secretariat;
13. Requests bilateral sources to continue to assist the interim secretariat as hitherto;
14. Requests the head of the interim secretariat to maximize opportunities for collaborative work with other secretariat entities, including the secretariat of the Commission on Sustainable Development;
15. Requests the Secretary-General to maintain the special voluntary fund established under paragraph 10 of General Assembly resolution 45/212 to support the participation of developing countries, in particular the least developed among them and small island developing countries, as well as developing countries stricken by drought and desertification, in the work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee and in the first session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, bearing in mind, inter alia, resolution INC/1992/1 of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee;
16. Also requests the Secretary-General to maintain the trust fund established under paragraph 20 of General Assembly resolution 45/212 to contribute to the costs of the interim secretariat of the Convention;
17. Takes note with appreciation of the contributions made to these extrabudgetary funds and invites further adequate and timely contributions to both funds;
18. Decides that, subject to the relevant provisions of General Assembly resolutions 40/243 of 18 December 1985, 41/213 of 19 December 1986 and 42/211 of 21 December 1987, the costs of the work of the Committee and the interim secretariat should be funded within the current and forthcoming programme budgets, without adversely affecting the programmed activities of the United Nations, and through voluntary contributions to the trust fund, as appropriate;
19. Welcomes the invitation by the Government of Germany to host the first session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention;
20. Invites the Chairman of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to submit a final report to the General Assembly on behalf of the Committee on the completion of the Committee’s work, following the conclusion of the first session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention;
21. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session on the implementation of the present resolution;
22. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-ninth session the item entitled “Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind”.

General Assembly resolution 47/195

On the same date, the Assembly, by decision 47/446, took note of a report of the Second Committee,(18) which had considered two draft resolutions on protection of the global climate. The Committee decided to take no action on one draft,(19) but the Chairman announced that he would submit it, with amendments, directly to the Assembly in plenary meeting. The other draft text(20) was subsequently withdrawn by its sponsor.

Convention on Biological Diversity
The Convention on Biological Diversity was opened for signature at the Earth Summit on 5 June and was to remain open in New York until 4 June 1993. During the year it was signed by 160 States and EEC and ratified by six States.(9) The Convention would enter into force on the ninetieth day after the deposit of the thirtieth instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession. The Convention’s objectives were the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of genetic resources. Its 42 articles covered, among other things, the use of terms; jurisdictional scope; cooperation; identification and monitoring; in-situ and ex-situ conservation; sustainable use of components of biological diversity; incentive measures; research and training; public education; impact assessment and minimizing adverse impacts; access to genetic resources; access to and transfer of technology; exchange of information; technical and scientific cooperation; handling of bio-
technology and distribution of its benefits; financial resources; settlement of disputes; and adoption of protocols.

The Convention was drafted by the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Convention on Biological Diversity, which held two sessions in 1992 (Nairobi, 6-15 February(21) and 11-22 May(22)). It was adopted by the Conference for the Adoption of the Agreed Text of the Convention on Biological Diversity (Nairobi, 22 May). The Conference also adopted resolutions inviting the Global Environment Facility (see below) to serve as the interim financial mechanism for the Convention, calling for international cooperation in the conservation of biological diversity, and describing the interrelationship between the Convention and the promotion of sustainable agriculture.

Montreal Protocol

The parties to the 1987 Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer,(23) which entered into force on 1 January 1989, held their fourth meeting from 23 to 25 November at Copenhagen, Denmark.(24) They agreed to accelerate the Protocol’s schedule for phasing out several ozone-depleting substances, including chlorofluorocarbons, carbon tetrachloride, halons and methyl chloroform. They also amended the Protocol to include hydrochlorofluorocarbons, hydrobromofluorocarbons and methyl bromide among the substances to be regulated. The amendment would enter into force on 1 January 1994, provided that 20 States parties to the Protocol had approved it. In addition, a multilateral fund was created to assist developing countries in eliminating the controlled substances. At the end of the year, 97 States and EEC were parties to the Protocol.(9)

The 1990 London Amendment to the Montreal Protocol(25) entered into force on 10 August 1992 with the ratification, acceptance, approval or accession of 27 States during the year. Forty-one States and EEC had become parties to the Amendment by the end of the year.(9)

Global Environment Facility

The Global Environment Facility (GEF), a joint effort of the World Bank, UNDP and UNEP, was established in 1991(26) to help developing countries respond to environmental problems in four programme areas: climate change, ozone depletion, pollution of international waters and biodiversity. UNCED, in Agenda 21, recommended that GEF be restructured to facilitate its financing of environmental activities.

GEF participants held two meetings during the year (Washington, D.C., 29 and 30 April; Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire, 3-5 December) to begin the process of evaluation and restructuring to meet those requirements.(27)

In April, participating Governments decided that land degradation issues, primarily desertification and deforestation, as they related to the four established programme areas, would be eligible for financing by GEF.(28) It was also agreed that GEF would operate as the funding mechanism for the climate change and biodiversity conventions signed at UNCED.

At the December meeting, participants reiterated the April decision, but did not reach consensus on including land degradation in GEF as a priority area.

REFERENCES


Environmental activities

State of the environment

A report entitled “The state of the environment (1972-1992): saving our planet—challenges and hopes”(1) was prepared for presentation to UNCED by the UNEP Executive Director, pursuant to a 1989 request of the Governing Council.(2) It comprised five parts: the state of the environment; development activities and environment; human conditions and well-being; perceptions, attitudes and responses; and challenges and priorities for action.

The report said that the most significant concerns were the lack of many of the prerequisites for informed decision-making and good environmental management, in particular: the database was still of variable quality, with a shortage of data from developing countries; despite advances in the technical ability to monitor the world environment, those advances had not been generally applied, mainly because of a lack of equipment and trained personnel in many countries; there had been no agreement on the socio-economic indicators of a healthy relationship between people and their environment or on standards for a decent en-
environment; and comprehensive assessments of the environmental situation and of the Earth's carrying capacity were, in consequence, difficult.

In his opening statement to the UNEP Governing Council (Nairobi, 3-5 February), the Executive Director said the report showed that, despite the efforts undertaken, the global environment was worse than it had been 20 years earlier. Not one major environmental issue raised at the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment had been solved, while new problems of planetary dimensions had emerged. The report, he said, outlined achievable targets that could constitute an agenda for action for the next decade.

On 5 February the Council took note of the report and requested the Executive Director to bring it to the attention of UNCED.

Protection against harmful products and wastes

The Secretary-General submitted in June 1992 a report on products harmful to health and the environment, containing the third triennial review of the consolidated list of products whose consumption and/or sale had been banned, withdrawn, severely restricted or not approved by Governments. The first such review was submitted in 1986.

In accordance with a 1989 General Assembly resolution, the report reviewed the list and discussed issues and future directions. It concluded that the list should continue to refer to all the relevant work being accomplished within the United Nations system and ensure that for each product entry reference was made to the complementary publications and international conventions. The fourth issue of the list, published at the end of 1991, covered regulatory action taken by 92 Governments on more than 600 products.


The Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, adopted in 1989, entered into force on 5 May 1992. It was ratified or acceded to by 19 States during the year.

Ecosystems

Desertification and drought control

In response to a 1989 request of the General Assembly, the UNEP Executive Director submitted a report to UNCED on the status of desertification and implementation of the 1977 United Nations Plan of Action to Combat Desertification (PACD). The report considered the world status of desertification, PACD, policy guidelines and course of action for combating desertification, and financing. Currently, desertification affected about 3.6 billion hectares—70 per cent of the total drylands, or nearly a quarter of the total land area of the world—and affected about one sixth of the world’s population.

The report presented five preventive, corrective and rehabilitation measures, as well as six supporting measures.

On 5 February the Governing Council took note of the report and endorsed the preventive and corrective activities. It recommended that Governments provide additional financial and technical assistance on the most favourable terms, in particular to the developing countries, to deal with desertification, and invited countries participating in GEF to consider financing anti-desertification programmes. The Council further recommended that Agenda 21 address desertification and the financing of programmes to combat it, and requested the Executive Director to transmit the report to the UNCED Secretary-General for consideration by the Preparatory Committee. The Council also requested the Executive Director to give emphasis to refining the assessment of the status of desertification, promoting the adoption as well as the monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of the report’s policy guidelines and course of action and assigning benchmarks and indicators of progress. The Executive Director was to report to the Council in 1993 on implementation of the decision.

Studies by the Secretary-General. In June 1992, in response to a 1991 request of the Economic and Social Council, the Secretary-General presented an interim report on combating aridity, soil erosion, salinity, waterlogging, desertification and the effects of drought in South Asia. Although the Council had requested him, in collaboration with the heads of UNEP, UNDP, UNCED and other organizations, to assess the problem and its effects on the peoples of the region, it was determined that a study of such magnitude could not be completed in the timeframe specified. The report was therefore limited to informing the Council of arrangements being made for the preparation of the study, and was submitted on the understanding that the full study would be presented in 1993.

In September, in response to a 1991 General Assembly request, the Secretary-General submitted a report highlighting the requirements for implementing Agenda 21 on desertification and drought. The Secretary-General hoped that the international community would increase assistance to such activities, and suggested that the Assembly might consider call-
ing for a percentage of the expected increase in ODA funds to be specifically allocated to them.

UNEP activities. In a report(18) to the UNEP Governing Council on the implementation of PACD in 1991 and 1992, the Executive Director stated that UNEP, during that period, assisted Argentina, Bahrain, Mongolia, Oman, Peru, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen in developing national plans of action to combat desertification. In addition, UNEP, through its Desertification Control Programme Activity Centre, continued to provide assistance to Mozambique and Zimbabwe for the formulation and initiation of pilot village projects. In support of the African Ministerial Conference on Environment pilot village programme, which trained African villagers and technicians in ecological farming, UNEP in October organized a training workshop at Nanjing, China, for 20 participants from 17 French-speaking African countries.

The Desertification Control Research and Training Network for Asia and the Pacific (DESCONAP) was given high priority during the period. In February, the third DESCONAP regional consultative meeting and tripartite review meeting was held in Thailand, and, in November, an expert group meeting for the Asia-Pacific and West Asia regions was held at Tehran, Iran, with the aim of developing a unified approach to desertification assessment and mapping. In addition, UNEP participated in the organization of four regional seminars and workshops on desertification control. An international symposium on soil resilience and sustainable land use (Budapest, Hungary, 28 September-2 October) was attended by 164 scientists representing 33 countries and 18 international organizations.

UNEP continued to conduct training programmes on combating desertification. In 1991-1992, 231 participants from Africa, Asia and Latin America were trained in the management of dryland natural resources, sustainable food production, monitoring and assessment of desertification, increased application of new technologies and public information. A project was initiated to accumulate data on successful desertification control projects, with a view to their replication elsewhere.

UNEP continued to disseminate information on programme results and problems related to desertification control worldwide. Issues 20 and 21 of the Desertification Control Bulletin were published in 1992, and the World Atlas of Desertification, containing maps of thematic indicators of desertification, was published and distributed to Governments at UNCED.

During the year, the Governments participating in GEF decided that desertification projects would be eligible for financing by GEF (see above). UNDP action. On 26 May,(19) the UNDP Governing Council requested the Administrator to report in 1993 on proposals on specific ways to combat desertification and drought, including strengthening the coordinated operations of the United Nations system.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ACTION

On 31 July, the Economic and Social Council, acting on a recommendation of its Economic Committee, adopted resolution 1992/55 without vote.

Combating aridity, soil erosion, salinity, water-logging, desertification and the effects of drought in South Asia

The Economic and Social Council, Recalling its resolution 1991/97 of 26 July 1991, Taking note of the interim note by the Secretary-General on the implementation of Economic and Social Council resolution 1991/97, Stressing that south Asia, one of the most populous regions in the world, contains significant areas subject to aridity, soil erosion, salinity, water-logging, desertification and the effects of drought, which affect the lives of millions of people and the entire environment of the region, Stressing also the importance of the study requested in its resolution 1991/97 in the context of national and international cooperative efforts,

1. Notes with concern that the complete implementation of resolution 1991/97 could not be carried out and its results presented to the Council at its substantive session of 1992;

2. Urges the Secretary-General, in full compliance with resolution 1991/97, to submit the study to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session.

Economic and Social Council resolution 1992/55

31 July 1992 Meeting 42 Adopted without vote

Approved by Economic Committee (E/1992/109) without vote; vote, 28 July (meeting 16); 4-nation draft (E/1992/C.1/L.10), orally revised following informal consultations; agenda item 12.

Sponsors: Bangladesh, India, Iran, Pakistan.

The Council, by resolution 1992/31, appealed to the international community to contribute generously, on a voluntary basis, to the second phase of the Special Programme for Sub-Saharan African Countries Affected by Drought and Desertification of the International Fund for Agricultural Development.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 22 December, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Second Committee, adopted without vote resolution 47/188.

Establishment of an 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

The General Assembly, Recalling its resolutions 44/172 A of 19 December 1989, 44/228 of 22 December 1989 and other relevant General
Assembly resolutions, as well as decisions adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, in particular the recommendation by which the Conference invited the General Assembly to establish at its forty-seventh session, under its auspices, an 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, with a view to finalizing, such a convention by June 1994,

1. Welcomes with satisfaction the results and the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, particularly chapter 12 of Agenda 21, entitled “Managing fragile ecosystems: combating desertification and drought”;  
2. Decides to establish, under its auspices, an 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, taking into account proposals that may be submitted by States participating in the negotiating process, with a view to finalizing such a convention by June 1994, and welcomes the candidature of Ambassador Bo Kjellen (Sweden) for the chairmanship of the Committee;  
3. Also decides that the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee shall be open to all States Members of the United Nations or members of the specialized agencies, with the participation of observers in accordance with the established practice of the General Assembly;  
4. Further decides that the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee shall hold, in addition to an organizational session, five substantive sessions, each lasting for two weeks, at Geneva and Nairobi, in New York and, in accordance with paragraph 5 of General Assembly resolution 40/243 of 18 December 1985, in Paris; the dates of these sessions will be determined by the Committee at its organizational session, subject to review of the timetable at the end of each negotiating session and taking into account the schedule of other related meetings;  
5. Decides that at the first session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, to be held at Nairobi, the first week shall be devoted to the sharing of technical information and assessments, with the involvement of experts, on drought and desertification;  
6. Decides that provision shall be made for an organizational session of up to one week’s duration, to be held in New York not later than February 1993, in order to organize the work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee and to elect its officers, which shall consist of a chairman, three vice-chairmen and a rapporteur, each of the five regional groups being represented by one officer;  
7. Requests the Secretary-General to establish at Geneva as soon as possible an ad hoc secretariat of appropriate size and calibre, drawing, inter alia on staff resources of the United Nations system, in order to ensure that the ad hoc secretariat embodies the requisite technical expertise to assist the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee in the fulfilment of its mandate;  
8. Invites the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office, the United Nations Environment Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the World Health Organization, the World Meteorological Organization, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and other relevant international organizations dealing with desertification, drought and development, to make appropriate contributions to the work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee in the fulfilment of its mandate;  
9. Decides that the Secretary-General shall appoint as head of the ad hoc secretariat a senior official at an appropriate level who shall act under the guidance of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee;  
10. Requests the Secretary-General, through the head of the ad hoc secretariat, to prepare draft rules of procedure to be considered by the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee at its organizational session;  
11. Requests the head of the ad hoc secretariat to make available to the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, at the first substantive session, the most relevant and recent information available, in conformity with its mandate as stated in paragraph 2 above;  
12. Decides to establish a multidisciplinary panel of experts to assist the ad hoc secretariat and, under its authority, to provide the necessary expertise in the scientific, technical, legal and other related fields, making full use of the resources and expertise within and available to Governments and/or organizations of the United Nations system dealing with drought and desertification;  
13. Also decides that the negotiation process shall be funded through existing United Nations budgetary resources, without negatively affecting its programmed activities, and through voluntary contributions to a trust fund established specifically for that purpose for the duration of the negotiations and administered by the head of the ad hoc secretariat, under the authority of the Secretary-General;  
14. Urges Governments, regional economic integration organizations and other interested organizations, including non-governmental organizations, to contribute generously to the trust fund;  
15. Decides to establish a special voluntary fund, to be administered by the head of the ad hoc secretariat, under the authority of the Secretary-General, to assist developing countries affected by desertification and drought, in particular the least developed countries, to participate fully and effectively in the negotiation process, and invites Governments, regional economic integration organizations and other interested organizations, including non-governmental organizations, to contribute generously to the fund;  
16. Invites relevant or interested organizations, organs, programmes and agencies of the United Nations system and intergovernmental, subregional and regional organizations to participate actively in the work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee;  
17. Urges States to organize, in close collaboration with the regional commissions and national, subregional and regional organizations, activities to support the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee process, with the involvement of the scientific and industrial communities, trade unions, the relevant non-governmental organizations and other interested groups;  
18. Invites the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office to assist the countries covered under its mandate in their preparations for and participation in the negotiating process and to mobilize resources for this purpose;
19. Invites all relevant non-governmental organizations and, especially, encourages non-governmental organizations from developing countries to contribute constructively to the success of the negotiating process in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee and taking into account procedures followed in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development process;

20. Requests the Chairman of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to submit progress reports to the Commission on Sustainable Development and other appropriate bodies;

21. Requests the Secretary-General to bring to the present resolution the attention of all Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and relevant scientific institutions;

22. Also requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution;

23. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-eighth session a sub-item entitled “Elaboration of an international convention to combat desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa” under an item entitled “Implementation of decisions and recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development”.

General Assembly resolution 47/188

22 December 1992 Meeting 93 Adopted without vote

Approved by Second Committee (A/47/719) without vote, 16 December (meeting 51); draft by Malaysia (A/C.2/47/L.46); agenda item 79. Financial implications. 5th Committee, A/47/R/14; S-G, A/C.2/47/L.90; A/C.5/47/81.

Meeting numbers. GA 47th session: 2nd Committee 51; 5th Committee 49; plenary 93.

Also on 22 December, by decision 47/444, the Assembly took note of the Secretary-General’s report on implementing Agenda 21 in the areas of desertification and drought.

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Marine ecosystems

Straddling and highly migratory fish stocks

The problems relating to straddling fish stocks (those occurring within the exclusive economic zones of two or more coastal States or both within the exclusive economic zone and in an area beyond and adjacent to it) and highly migratory fish stocks were considered in 1992 by UNCED and the General Assembly.

On 21 May, Mexico transmitted to UNCED the text of the Declaration of Cancun, adopted by the International Conference on Responsible Fishing (Cancun, Mexico, 6-8 May), (20) which called on States to take steps to ensure the supply of fish products and to improve management systems and scientific knowledge.

UNCED noted in Agenda 21 that during the past decade fisheries on the high seas had expanded considerably. There were problems of unregulated fishing, excessive fleet size, the reflagging of vessels to escape controls, insufficiently selective fishing gear, unreliable databases and lack of sufficient cooperation between States. Agenda 21 said that States should convene an intergovernmental conference to promote implementation of the provisions of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (21) on straddling and highly migratory fish stocks.

General Assembly action

On 22 December, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Second Committee, adopted without vote resolution 47/192.

United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks

The General Assembly,

Recalling Agenda 21, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, in particular chapter 17, programme area C, relating to the sustainable use and conservation of marine living resources of the high seas,

Recalling also the Strategy for Fisheries Management and Development, adopted by the World Conference on Fisheries Management and Development,

Taking note of the Declaration of Cancun, adopted at the International Conference on Responsible Fishing held at Cancun, Mexico, from 6 to 8 May 1992,

Inviting all members of the international community, particularly those with fishing interests, to strengthen their cooperation in the conservation and management of living marine resources, in accordance with the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea,

Taking note of relevant recent discussions on international fisheries,

1. Decides to convene in 1993, under United Nations auspices and in accordance with the mandate agreed upon at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, an intergovernmental conference on straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks, which should complete its work before the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly;

2. Also decides that the intergovernmental conference, in accordance with the said mandate, shall take into account relevant activities at the subregional, regional and global levels, with a view to promoting effective implementation of the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks, and that, drawing, inter alia, on scientific and technical studies by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, it should:

(a) Identify and assess existing problems related to the conservation and management of such fish stocks;

(b) Consider means of improving fisheries cooperation among States;

(c) Formulate appropriate recommendations;

3. Reaffirms that the work and results of the conference should be fully consistent with the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, in particular the rights and obligations of coastal States and States fishing on the high seas, and that States should give full effect to the high seas fisheries provisions of the Convention with regard to fisheries popu-
lations whose ranges lie both within and beyond exclusive economic zones (straddling fish stocks) and highly migratory fish stocks;

4. Requests the Secretary-General to invite to the conference those listed in paragraph 9 of its resolution 46/168 of 19 December 1991 and in its decisions 46/469 and 46/470 of 13 April 1992, and also to invite regional and subregional fisheries organizations to attend as observers;

5. Decides that in 1993 the conference shall hold an organizational session of up to five days at United Nations Headquarters for the purposes of electing a chairman and other officials, namely, three vice-chairmen and a rapporteur, giving due regard to equitable geographical representation, and of organizing its work;

6. Requests the Secretary-General to make appropriate secretariat arrangements;

7. Requests that in 1993 the conference shall hold a session of three weeks' duration in July at United Nations Headquarters to deal with substantive matters;

8. Requests the Secretary-General to prepare draft rules of procedure for the consideration of the conference at its organizational session;

9. Decides to establish a voluntary fund for the purpose of assisting developing countries, especially those most concerned by the subject-matter of the conference, in particular the least developed among them, to participate fully and effectively in the conference, and invites Governments and regional economic integration organizations to contribute to the fund;

10. Also decides that the funds necessary for the preparatory process and the conference itself should, subject to the relevant provisions of General Assembly resolutions 40/243 of 18 December 1985, 41/213 of 19 December 1986 and 42/211 of 21 December 1987, be made available within the programme budget without adversely affecting other ongoing activities and without prejudice to the provision of extrabudgetary resources;

11. Invites relevant specialized agencies, particularly the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and other appropriate organs, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system, as well as regional and subregional fisheries organizations, to contribute relevant scientific and technical studies and reports and to organize regional and subregional technical meetings in order to contribute to the work of the conference;

12. Invites relevant non-governmental organizations from developed and developing countries to contribute to the conference, within the areas of their competence and expertise, on the basis of procedures for their accreditation used for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, as recommended in paragraph 38.44 of Agenda 21;

13. Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session a report on the work of the conference;

14. Requests the Secretary-General to bring the present resolution to the attention of all members of the international community, relevant intergovernmental organizations, agencies, programmes and bodies within the United Nations system, regional and subregional fisheries organizations and relevant non-governmental organizations;

15. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-eighth session, under an item entitled “Implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development”, a sub-item entitled “Sustainable use and conservation of the marine living resources of the high seas: United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks”.

General Assembly resolution 47/192

22 December 1992 Meeting 93 Adopted without vote

Approved by Second Committee (A/47/719) without vote, 16 December (meeting 51); draft by Malaysia (A/C.2/47/L.62), orally revised; agenda item 79.


Meeting numbers. GA 47th session: 2nd Committee 51; 5th Committee 49; plenary 93.

Drift-net fishing

In accordance with a 1991 General Assembly resolution, (22) the Secretary-General, in October 1992, (23) submitted a report on large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing and its impact on the living marine resources of the world’s oceans and seas. The report reviewed region by region the activities of intergovernmental organizations and States that had been called on to implement a global moratorium on all large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing.

The Assembly, by decision 47/443 of 22 December, took note of the report and requested a further report in 1993.

REFERENCES


Programme and finances of UNEP

On 8 December, on the recommendation of the Secretary-General, (1) the General Assembly appointed Elizabeth Dowdeswell of Canada as UNEP Executive Director for a four-year term beginning on 1 January 1993.

Finances

Environment Fund

As at 31 December 1992, (2) $62.5 million had been paid to the Environment Fund by 44 countries for 1992; another 32 countries were expected to make contributions totalling $1.2 million for the year. The estimated total of $63.7 million repre-
sented an increase of 6.8 per cent over the 1991 contributions of $60 million, but was significantly short of the Governing Council’s target of $100 million.

1990-1991 accounts
On 23 December, the General Assembly, by resolution 47/211, accepted the financial report and audited financial statements of the Environment Fund for the biennium ended 31 December 1991(3) and the audit opinions and report of the Board of Auditors regarding the Fund.

Trust funds
Forty-live general and technical cooperation trust funds,(4) administered by UNEP, spent $32.7 million during the 1990-1991 biennium.

REFERENCES

Environmental aspects of political, economic and other issues
Pursuant to a 1991 request of the General Assembly,(1) the Secretary-General submitted in June 1992 a report(2) on international cooperation to mitigate the environmental consequences on Kuwait and other countries in the region resulting from the situation between Iraq and Kuwait. The United Nations inter-agency plan of action to respond to the environmental crisis was led by UNEP, in cooperation with the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME) and a number of specialized agencies.

The Secretary-General reported that as a result of the massive oil spill in the Persian Gulf, estimated at between 6 million and 8 million barrels, about 600 kilometres of coastline along the Saudi coast from Khafgi to Abu Ali Island were severely damaged. At least 30,000 marine birds died; 20 per cent of the mangroves on the eastern coast of Saudi Arabia were oiled and about 50 per cent of the coral reefs were affected. The Iranian, Iraqi and Kuwaiti coasts were affected to a lesser extent.

Oil pollution was not limited to oil spills. Fallout from burning oil formed slicks on the surface of the water, releasing polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and heavy metal-laden soot particles into the water column. Beaches were destroyed through the construction of defence installations. The destruction of sewage-treatment plants in Kuwait resulted in the release of more than 50,000 cubic metres per day of raw sewage into Kuwait Bay, threatening the intertidal ecosystem.

The United Nations effort to assess the state of the marine environment culminated in the launching, in late February 1992, of a 100-day cruise in the ROPME sea area by the Mount Mitchell, a 231-foot research vessel of the United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Air pollution from the burning oil wells in Kuwait represented a potential health hazard. About 6 million barrels of oil were being burnt daily from more than 600 burning wells. However, a WMO/UNEP meeting of experts (Geneva, 25-29 May) analysed the atmospheric effects of the oil fires and found that the smoke had no effect on the weather or climate outside the region.

The destruction of terrestrial ecosystems was extensive, particularly in Iraq, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. In Kuwait, the impact on soil and vegetation was very serious owing to the formation of huge oil pools, extending over vast areas of the desert. Moreover, a layer of oil droplets and soot covered hundreds of square kilometres. In some areas, pulverization of the surface soil by off-road military vehicles had destabilized the soil, increasing its vulnerability to wind erosion. In addition, the presence of land-mines and unexploded ordnance and munitions still presented a serious hazard to human life and the environment.

In Iraq, the military activities devastated large areas of land and adversely affected the agricultural production and livestock of the country, while in Saudi Arabia, the main terrestrial impact was due to the fallout of soot, particularly south of the Saudi/Kuwaiti border.

While inter-agency activities were carried out at the technical level, further attention was given to the political and financial aspects of the environmental crisis. Following a request from Kuwait, Margaret Joan Anstee, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna, was dispatched in October 1991 to Kuwait as the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to coordinate United Nations efforts.

In March 1992, Joseph Verner Reed was named to succeed Miss Anstee, with the title of Special Representative. He visited Kuwait and other countries of the region to reassess the situation after the burning oil wells were capped. He assured the Kuwaiti Government of the continued support of the United Nations to redress the environmental damage in Kuwait and the region.

An environmental rehabilitation programme was prepared by UNEP in cooperation with ROPME. The programme included project proposals covering marine, atmospheric and terrestrial pollution, technical cooperation aspects and the needs of the countries of the region for oil clean-up, recovery and restoration.
On 30 July, the Economic and Social Council, by decision 1992/285, took note of the Secretary-General’s report.

UNEP action. On 5 February, the UNEP Governing Council invited the international community, Governments and intergovernmental organizations to participate technically and financially in rehabilitation programmes aimed at mitigating the environmental deterioration of the region and in strengthening ROPME’s capability to coordinate and implement those programmes.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 18 December, on the recommendation of the Second Committee, the General Assembly adopted resolution 47/151 by recorded vote.

International cooperation to mitigate the environmental consequences on Kuwait and other countries in the region resulting from the situation between Iraq and Kuwait

The General Assembly,

Aware of the disastrous situation caused in Kuwait and neighbouring areas by the torching and destruction of hundreds of its oil wells and of the other environmental consequences on the atmosphere and on land and marine life,

Bearing in mind all relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular section E of resolution 687(1991) of 3 April 1991,

Having taken note of the report submitted by the Secretary-General to the Security Council describing the nature and extent of the environmental damage suffered by Kuwait,

Recalling decision 16/11 A adopted by the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on 31 May 1991,

Recalling also its resolution 46/216 of 20 December 1991,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General,

Professionally concerned at the degradation of the environment as a consequence of the damage, especially the threat posed to the health and well-being of the people of Kuwait and the people of the region, and the adverse impact on the economic activities of Kuwait and other countries of the region, including the effects on livestock, agriculture and fishing, as well as on wildlife,

Welcoming the recent Mount Mitchell Research Cruise, which was organized under the sponsorship of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the United Nations Environment Programme, to make a scientific assessment of environmental conditions in the region,

Awaiting the meetings due to be held in 1993, at which the results of the Mount Mitchell Research Cruise will be discussed and evaluated,

Acknowledging the fact that dealing with this catastrophe goes beyond the capabilities of the countries of the region and, in that regard, recognizing the need for strengthened international cooperation to deal with the situation,

Noting with appreciation the appointment by the Secretary-General of an Under-Secretary-General as his Personal Representative to coordinate United Nations efforts in this field,

Also noting with appreciation the efforts already undertaken by the Member States of the region, other States, the organizations of the United Nations system and governmental and non-governmental organizations to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of this environmental catastrophe,

Bearing in mind the effective work of the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the inter-agency task force established under the leadership of the United Nations Environment Programme especially to consider the environmental situation in the region, as well as the plan of action,

Expressing its special appreciation to the Governments that have extended financial support to the two trust funds established for the purpose by the Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization and the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, and to the Governments and organizations that supported the recent international research cruise organized under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the United Nations Environment Programme,

1. Appeals to all States Members of the United Nations, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, scientific bodies and individuals to provide assistance for programmes aimed at the study and mitigation of the environmental degradation of the region and for strengthening the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment and its role in coordinating the implementation of these programmes;

2. Calls upon the organizations and programmes of the United Nations system, in particular the International Maritime Organization and the United Nations Environment Programme, to pursue their efforts to assess the short-term as well as the long-term impact of the environmental degradation of the region and to consider measures that may be needed to counteract these effects;

3. Requests the Secretary-General, through his Personal Representative, to render assistance to the members of the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment in the formulation and implementation of a coordinated and consolidated programme of action comprising costed project profiles, to help identify all possible resources for the programme of action and, inter alia for strengthening the environmental capacities of the members of the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment to deal with this problem, and to allocate, within existing resources, the minimum resources required to enable his Personal Representative to continue to help coordinate the activities of the United Nations system to that end;

4. Also requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session, through the Economic and Social Council, a report on the implementation of the present resolution;

5. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-ninth session the sub-item entitled “International

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cooperation to mitigate the environmental consequences on Kuwait and other countries in the region resulting from the situation between Iraq and Kuwait” under the item entitled “Development and international economic cooperation”.

General Assembly resolution 47/151
18 December 1992  Meeting 92  159-0-2 (recorded vote)

Approved by Second Committee (A/47/718/Add.6) by recorded vote (133-0-1), 9 December (meeting 49); 101-nation draft (A/C.2/47/L.7/Rev.1), orally amended by Vice-Chairman; agenda item 78 (e).

Sponsors: Afghanistan, Algeria, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Benin, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Hungary, India, Iran, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Madagascar, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mongolia, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, United States, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Meeting numbers. GA 47th session: 2nd Committee 17, 49; plenary 92. Recorded vote in Assembly as follows:

In favour: Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d’Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, United States, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against: None.

Abstaining: Iraq, Sudan.

By resolution 47/37, the Assembly urged States to ensure compliance with the existing international law applicable to the protection of the environment in times of armed conflict.

REFERENCES