

General aspects

Two sessions(1) of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) were held in 1982, at Nairobi, Kenya. To commemorate the tenth anniversary of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment,(3) a session of special character was held from 10 to 18 May, at which the Council adopted the Nairobi Declaration—expressing serious concern about the state of the environment and requesting intensified efforts to protect and improve it—and five substantive resolutions. At its tenth session, held from 20 to 31 May, the Council adopted 27 decisions on various aspects of the environment programme.

The activities of UNEP in 1982 were described in a report by its Executive Director to the Governing Council.(2)

Reports. (1)UNEP Council, A/37/25; (2)UNEP Executive Director, UNEP/GC.11/2.

Yearbook reference. (3)1972, p. 318.

Programme and finances of UNEP

Programme policy

Special session of the UNEP Governing Council

The UNEP Governing Council held a session of special character at Nairobi from 10 to 18 May 1982.(1) Open to all States, the session commemorated the tenth anniversary of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm, Sweden, June 1972).(6)

The main result of the session—held in accordance with General Assembly resolutions of 1980(4) and 1981(5)—was the adoption by consensus on 18 May of the Nairobi Declaration, in which States expressed serious concern about the state of the environment and requested Governments and peoples to intensify efforts at every level to protect and improve it. States reaffirmed their commitment to the 1972 Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment(7) and the Action Plan for the Human Environment,(8) as well as to the further strengthening and expansion of national efforts and international co-operation in environmental protection. They also reaffirmed their support for strengthening UNEP as the major catalytic instrument for global environmental co-operation and called for increased resources, particularly through the Environment Fund, to address environment problems. They urged all Governments and peoples to discharge their historical responsibility to ensure that the planet was passed over to

future generations in a condition guaranteeing a life in human dignity for all.

Of six resolutions adopted on 18 May, one was on the state of the environment in 1982, by which the Governing Council examined the major achievements in implementing the 1972 Action Plan; identified the major environmental trends, potential problems and priorities for action by the United Nations system during 1982-1992, laid down the basic orientations of UNEP for that decade, and dealt with the planning and implementation of environmental activities; and expressed its views on institutional arrangements.

By section II of the same resolution,(3) the Council looked at perceptions of environmental issues that had evolved over the previous decade which, it considered, together with the Nairobi Declaration, complemented the principles contained in the 1972 Conference Declaration. The Council identified the following perceptions: disarmament and security issues deserved attention; the wise use of resources and enlightened conservation strategies should be considered prerequisites for sustainable growth; research into alternative consumption patterns, technological styles and land-use strategies was called for; interconnections between components and processes supporting life should be considered in development planning; environmental development and management should be planned flexibly and monitored for unexpected changes; development plans should take account of the stability of environmental systems; developments in the transfer of certain inappropriate technologies, export of toxic substances and hazardous materials and certain marketing arrangements, could endanger the environment; and the United Nations system, particularly UNEP, must address environmental problems of poverty and underdevelopment.

In its 20 December resolution on the UNEP special session, the General Assembly endorsed the Governing Council's identification of the perceptions of environmental issues that had evolved between 1972 and 1982.(2)

The other resolutions adopted at the special session dealt with: establishing a special commission on long-term environment strategies (p. 14); arms and the environment; the environmental consequences of an Israeli project to build a canal linking the Mediterranean to the Dead Sea (See POLITICAL AND SECURITY QUESTIONS, Chapter IX); and resolutions and recommendations of an Intergovernmental Regional Meeting on the Environment in Latin America and the Caribbean (See ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL QUESTIONS, Chapter VIII).

Report. (1)UNEP Council, A/37/25.

Resolutions (1982)). (2)GA: 37/219, para. 5 (b) (i), 20 Dec.

(3)UNEP Council: I, sect. II, 18 May.

Resolutions (prior). GA: (4)35/74 5 Dec. 1980 (YUN 1980, p. 724); (5)36/189, 17 Dec. 1981 (YUN 1981, p. 821).

Yearbook reference. 1972. (6)p.318, (7)p. 319, (8)p. 322.