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