the Secretary-General noted that considerable progress in implementing certain principles had been achieved.

**Rio Declaration**

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

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

**Environment and sustainable development**

The Commission on Sustainable Development (fifth session, New York, 7-25 April) considered a January report of the Secretary-General on integrating socio-economic and environmental concerns in decision-making [E/CN.17/1997/2/Add.7]. He addressed three areas: the development of integrated and participatory strategies for sustainable development at the national level, where progress had been mixed since UNCED, with further steps needed to realize their full potential; development and use of specific policy-making tools and instruments that helped to integrate environment and development in decision-making, including environmental impact assessment and indicators; and development and application of integrated environmental and economic accounting, where some progress had been made at the international level but much work remained to be done at the national level.

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

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

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

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