



20TH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL OF THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME: 1-5 FEBRUARY 1999

The 20th session of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Governing Council took place at UNEP headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya, from 1-5 February 1999. This session marked the first meeting of the Council since the adoption of the Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of UNEP, the UN General Assembly Special Session to review the implementation of Agenda 21, and the appointment of Dr. Klaus Töpfer as UNEP Executive Director. The session consisted of a three-day technical segment and a two-day high-level segment. Approximately 600 delegates, including ministers and senior government officials from over 100 countries, as well as representatives from environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs), UN agencies, international organizations, business and industry, and youth organizations attended the week-long meeting.

"Reinvigorate," "reform" and "operationalize" emerged as three key themes of the Governing Council. The meeting demonstrated restored faith in UNEP as the prominent UN agency with the responsibility for the environment. The Governing Council took some 30 decisions on a range of topics including: the Environment Fund and administrative and other budgetary matters; policy issues, including the state of the environment, coordination and cooperation within and outside the UN, governance of UNEP and emerging policy issues; preparations for the seventh session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-7); the results of the UN General Assembly's consideration of the recommendations of the UN Task Force on Environment and Human Settlements; and linkages among and support to environmental and environment-related conventions. Throughout the week, delegates also participated in several special side-events, including panel discussions on sustainable tourism, chemicals and forests, as well as a roundtable on global telecommunications.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

In 1972, the United Nations Environment Programme was established as a result of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, held in Stockholm from 5-16 June 1972. The conference created an action plan for environmental policy, an Environment Fund, a declaration of 26 principles on human environment and the United Nations Environment Programme. Established to provide a forum for the international community to address major and emerging environmental policy issues, the UNEP Governing Council (GC)

generally meets on a biennial basis with special sessions convened in between. It consists of 58 States who serve four-year terms on the following basis of equitable geographic distribution: 16 African States; 13 Asian States; 6 Eastern European States; 13 Western European and Other States; and 10 Latin American and Caribbean States. The GC reports to the UN General Assembly (UNGA) and is charged with: promoting international environmental cooperation and recommending policies to this end; providing policy guidance for the direction and coordination of environmental programmes in the UN system; reviewing the world environment situation; and promoting the contribution of relevant scientific and other professional communities to the acquisition, assessment and exchange of environmental knowledge and information and to the technical aspects of the formulation and implementation of environmental programmes within the UN system.

In addition to monitoring and assessing the state of the environment and disseminating the information to governments and NGOs, the GC's achievements include the initiation of negotiations on many major environmental conventions, including the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade (PIC Convention).

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UNCED: The 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) reaffirmed UNEP's mandate and called for an enhanced and strengthened role for UNEP and its GC. The GC was called on to continue to play its role with regard to policy guidance and coordination, taking into account the development perspective. Agenda 21 also listed 14 priority areas on which UNEP should concentrate, *inter alia*, strengthening its catalytic role in promoting environmental activities throughout the UN system; promoting international cooperation; coordinating and promoting scientific research; disseminating environmental information; raising general awareness; and further developing international environmental law.

19TH GOVERNING COUNCIL: Initially, the 19th session of the Governing Council convened from 27 January - 7 February 1997. However, the meeting was suspended on the final day when delegates could not agree on a proposal for the creation of a high-level committee to provide policy guidance to UNEP. As a result, officials from 34 countries met in Geneva on 21 March 1997 and decided to create a new multinational committee to mediate the dispute and offer advice on UNEP's future. The 19th session resumed at UNEP Headquarters from 3-4 April 1997 where delegates decided to establish a High-Level Committee of Ministers and Officials (HLCOM) as a subsidiary organ of the GC.

The 19th GC also adopted the Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of UNEP (decision GC19/1/1997). The Nairobi Declaration:

- states that UNEP has been and should continue to be the principal UN body in the field of the environment;
- reaffirms the role of UNEP as the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the UN system and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment;
- reaffirms the mandate of UNEP as set out in 1972 and further elaborated by Agenda 21; and
- sets out to improve the governance structure of UNEP by strengthening regionalization and decentralization, increasing participation of major groups and developing a cost effective and politically influential intersessional mechanism.

The HLCOM was given the mandate to: consider the international environmental agenda and to make reform and policy recommendations to the GC; provide guidance and advice to UNEP's Executive Director; enhance UNEP's collaboration and cooperation with other multilateral bodies, including the environmental conventions and their secretariats; and help mobilize adequate and predictable financial resources for UNEP.

The HLCOM consists of 36 members, elected by the GC from members of the UN and its specialized agencies. Members will serve for two years and represent regions as reflected by the current structure of UNEP's GC. Currently, the Committee convenes meetings at least once a year in Nairobi and may also convene elsewhere in connection with major international environmental meetings. The President of the GC and the Chair of the UNEP Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) are invited to attend. The European Community (EC) and other regional intergovernmental economic organizations may also attend.

The Nairobi Declaration also, with a view toward strengthening the CPR, revised the CPR's mandate to: review, monitor and assess the implementation of decisions of the GC on administrative, budgetary and programme matters; review UNEP's draft programme of work and budget; review reports requested of the Secretariat by the GC on the effectiveness, efficiency and transparency of the Secretariat's work; and prepare draft decisions for consideration by the GC based on inputs from the Secretariat.

The Nairobi Declaration was formerly endorsed at UN General Assembly Special Session for the review of the implementation of Agenda 21 (UNGASS) in June 1997.

FIFTH SPECIAL SESSION: The GC held its fifth special session in May 1998. This session adopted decisions on the evaluation of UNEP's management and administrative support; revitalization, reform and strengthening of UNEP; the contributions of UNEP to CSD-7; freshwater; the PIC Convention; the Global Environment Facility; and land degradation. The session decided to review the status of the ongoing reform of UNEP at the 20th session in order to provide the 55th session of the UNGA with its policy conclusions on institutional arrangements within the UN system and the role of UNEP in that context. The special session also confirmed the member States elected to the HLCOM.

UN TASK FORCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS: At the 51st session of the UNGA, the Secretary-General issued the results of a review of UN activities entitled "Renewing the United Nations: A Programme for Reform" (A/51/950). In the section on environment, habitat and sustainable development, the report reviewed developments since UNCED, including the proliferation of new actors in the field, the emergence of the CSD as an important policy forum, the augmented environmental capacities in UN organizations, and the disappointing response to the needs of developing countries for new and additional resources. The report concluded that there was a need for a more integrated systematic approach to policies and programmes throughout the range of UN activities in the economic and social field through mainstreaming the UN's commitment to sustainable development.

In order to initiate this process, the UN Task Force on Environment and Human Settlements was established under the chairmanship of the Executive Director of UNEP. In 1998, the conclusions and recommendations of the Task Force were forwarded to the 53rd session of the UNGA in the report of the Secretary-General on environment and human settlements (A/53/463). The report contained recommendations for, *inter alia*: the establishment of an Environmental Management Group; an annual ministerial-level global environmental forum; universal membership of the GC; and several measures to further incorporate and involve civil society. Although there has been no formal decision by the UNGA as yet, it is expected that the UNGA President will convene an open-ended working group in the near future to further discuss the report's recommendations.

REPORT OF THE MEETING

Amb. Sid-Ali Ketrاندji (Algeria), acting GC President, opened the 20th session of the GC, and called upon Shafqat Kakakhel, Deputy Executive Director of UNEP, to deliver a message from UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. The Secretary-General noted that the 53rd session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) reaffirmed the role of UNEP as the UN's principle environmental body. He remarked that the UNGA has yet to take a decision on the recommendations of the Secretary-General's Report on Environment and Human Settlements, and emphasized the importance of the GC's discussions on reform. He noted linkages between environment, sustainable development, poverty eradication and peace making. He stressed the need for a solid manifestation of the UN in Africa, and the importance of a strong and defined role for UNEP within UN reform.

Representatives of youth organizations highlighted a new Youth Advisory Council for UNEP and called for youth involvement in legislation of environmental laws and for strengthened support of the UNEP youth programme. Jorge Jimenez G. (Venezuela), on behalf of outgoing GC President Arnoldo Jose Gabaldon, noted efforts to overcome the institutional crisis UNEP faced when he was elected President in 1997. He identified the Nairobi Declaration as a clear expression of UNEP's role in the UN system and noted reform achieved in establishing the High-Level Committee of Ministers (HLCOM).



Amb. Ketrandji underscored innovative priorities of the work programme and UNEP's proposed plan of action to strengthen its relationship with the Global Environment Facility (GEF). He noted that this session will create a new universal covenant for the environment and an expression of universal solidarity. Francis Nyenze, Kenyan Minister for Environment and Conservation, expressed gratitude for UNEP's support for Africa. He supported UNEP's activities related to emergency response capacity, early warning assessment, coordination of environmental policy instruments, protection of water resources, and technology transfer. He requested adequate, stable and predictable funding for UNEP.

The Plenary then elected the Bureau: President László Miklós (Slovak Republic); Vice-Presidents Jean P. Nsengiyumva (Burundi), Leandro Arellano (Mexico) and Jan Pronk (Netherlands); and Rapporteur Hossein Fadaei (Iran). President Miklós said that UNEP's continuing role should be intersectoral and take into account development perspectives. He emphasized the important role of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) in strengthening UNEP's transparency and said Dr. Töpfer's appointment had helped restore confidence in UNEP. He said a functional orientation was a precondition for an integrated approach, particularly with respect to freshwater and environment and human settlements.

The Plenary then adopted the agenda and organization of work (UNEP/GC.20/1/Rev.1 and UNEP/GC.20/1/Add.1/Rev.1). President Miklós announced that Plenary would discuss the Secretary-General's Report on Environment and Human Settlements. EGYPT, on behalf of the African Group, noted commitment to reaching consensus on the issues. JAPAN, on behalf of the Asian Group, expressed sympathy to the Colombian people in light of the recent earthquake. BANGLADESH, on behalf of G-77/CHINA, said trying to reach decisions on the UN Task Force Report on Environment and Human Settlements could preempt the UNGA's continuing work, and supported, *inter alia*, a higher budget in view of likely contribution increases and a move toward joint implementation of GEF projects.

In delivering the policy statement of the Executive Director, Dr. Töpfer noted the impacts of the recent economic and financial shocks in Southeast Asia and Latin America on the global environmental agenda, and reiterated that economic dynamics should not result in long-term reversal of environment policy or the belief that environmental protection is dispensable. He highlighted progress in revitalizing and restructuring UNEP, including a new functional and integrated structure and the strengthening of regional offices. He said the proposed 2000-2001 biennial budget of US\$119.41 million included US\$100 million for programme activities, and emphasized that this is the minimum budget necessary for UNEP to regain essential effectiveness, critical mass and operating capital.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

The Committee of the Whole (COW) chaired by Vice-President Leandro Arellano met for seven sessions from 1-3 February to consider the programme, the Environment Fund, and administrative and other budgetary matters (UNEP/GC.20/22). The COW established a Working Group on budget-related issues that met for five sessions from 2-4 February. On Tuesday, 2 February, the COW held general discussions on the seven subprogramme areas of the programme of work 2000-2001: environmental assessment and early warning; policy development, law and implementation; technology, industry and economics; regional cooperation and representation; environmental conventions; and communications and public information. On Wednesday, 3 February, the COW reviewed the action plan on complementarity between UNEP and the GEF and took decisions on several topics, including: regional offices; functioning of the specialized offices of UNEP; a regional seas programme for the East Central Pacific; the Mercure satellite communications system; coral reefs; biosafety; freshwater; chemicals management; support to Africa and

economics, trade and financial services. The COW's decisions are contained in documents UNEP/GC.20/L.5/Rev.1 and UNEP/GC.20/L.5/Add.1/Rev.1.

BUDGET-RELATED ISSUES: On Monday, 1 February, Dr. Töpfer addressed the COW and provided introductory remarks on programme, the Environment Fund, and administrative and other budgetary matters. He particularly highlighted the proposed programme budgets for the biennium 1998-1999 and 2000-2001 (UNEP/GC.20/22). He characterized the budget as reflecting income projections, noting that the trend of decreasing contributions to the Environment Fund was reversed in 1998. He explained that the budget increase from US\$107.5 million (1998-1999) to US\$119.41 million (2000-2001) reflected an inflation rate of 10.3% and not a significant budget increase. He highlighted a 15% reduction in management and administrative support costs, and projected an additional 8% reduction in 2000-2001. Dr. Töpfer noted programme support staff costs had been transferred to the United Nations Offices in Nairobi (UNON) in July 1998. He said the top heaviness of the UNEP Secretariat had also been addressed. Dr. Töpfer also detailed the budget distribution for the seven new subprogrammes that constitute the significant proportion of the budget.

In the general debate on budget-related issues, EGYPT, on behalf of the African Group and supported by INDIA, on behalf of G-77/CHINA, ALGERIA, BURUNDI, CHINA, COLOMBIA, CUBA, KENYA, TUNISIA and MEXICO, endorsed the proposed programme budgets. The US and JAPAN said that the proposed budget for the 2000-2001 biennial is overly optimistic and expressed concern over how the money will be spent. NORWAY said that despite being optimistic, the budget can still be reached with increased government contributions. ALGERIA said the word "realistic" was offensive, stressing that the figure of US\$100 million is a minimum for giving UNEP any credibility. CANADA said discussions should focus on how to help UNEP gain credibility and questioned the Secretariat's grounds for being optimistic on the budget.

On Tuesday, 2 February, the COW established an open-ended Working Group on budget related issues chaired by Svein Aage Mehli (Norway). The group was charged with discussing all budget documents and consolidating draft decisions to submit to the COW for adoption. On Tuesday, the Group held general debate on budget issues. Chair Mehli designated a small drafting group to prepare a new draft decision, incorporating views expressed, on the proposed programme budget for biennium 2000-2001. The group agreed to the texts of draft decisions prepared by the CPR on issues of trust fund management and counterpart contributions and the cost of administering them. Participants also exchanged views over the issue of stable, adequate and predictable funding for UNEP. On Wednesday, 3 February, Chair Mehli updated the COW on the Working Group's work and presented the draft decisions. The COW adopted decisions on: status of implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS); management of trust funds and counterpart contributions; cost of administering trust funds and counterpart contributions; revision of financial rules of the Environment Fund; Environment Fund: financial report and audited accounts for the biennium 1996-1997; report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) on the Environment Fund budgets; and functioning of the Ombudsman Unit. A draft decision on stable, adequate and predictable funding for UNEP was also adopted with minor editorial amendment. The Working Group continued its consolidation of a new draft decision on the proposed programme budget for biennium 1998-1999 and 2000-2001 into late evening. On Thursday, 4 February, Chair Mehli briefed the COW on the extensive discussions held to achieve unbracketed text on the proposed programme budget for the biennium of 2000-2001. The Plenary adopted the following budget related decisions.



Proposed Programme Budget of the United Nations Environment Programme: This decision addresses the revised requirements for the biennium 1998-1999 and the proposed requirements for the biennium 2000-2001. The decision provides for, *inter alia*: harmonizing the budget with other UN bodies; broadening the funding base to include all members of the UN, especially countries that have developed a greater capacity to contribute; authorizing the Executive Director to prepare a US\$120 budget for the next biennium; provisionally increasing the administrative budget contingent on an increase from the UN regular budget; and authorizing the Executive Director to adjust each budget line by 20%. The decision also approves the revised appropriations of Fund resources in 1998-1999: US\$25.83 million for the management of administrative costs; US\$75 million for programme activities and US\$5 million for the programme reserve. It approves the proposed appropriation of Fund resources in 2000-2001: US\$14.23 million for management and administrative support costs; US\$100 million for programme activities and US\$5 million for the programme reserve. The decision also contains the breakdown of appropriation according to the biennium's programme of work.

OIOS Recommendations Implementation: This decision takes note of the current status and ongoing implementation of the recommendations of the OIOS, the Board of Auditors and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: This decision takes note of the recommendations of ACABQ and the comments of the Executive Director on the observations and recommendations of ACABQ. It requests the Executive Director to address all recommendations and to report to the CPR.

Funding for UNEP: The decision requests the Executive Director to develop, through consultations with governments, a strategy for stable, adequate and predictable funding for UNEP. It also calls on governments to provide financial and other resources to UNEP, and requests the Executive Director to report to the 21st GC on implementation progress.

Cost of Administering Trust Funds: This decision requests the Executive Director to implement appropriate actions to reduce the cost of programme support services provided to trust funds and related activities.

Revision of the Financial Rules of the Fund of the United Nations Environment Programme: The decision takes note of the report of the Executive Director on the relevant revision.

Ombudsman Unit: This decision: endorses the increase in financial and personnel allocations to the Ombudsman Unit in the 2000-2001 biennium; requests the Executive Director to prepare an evaluation report on the functioning of the Unit for consideration by the CPR; and decides to review the operations of the Ombudsman Unit at the 21st GC.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND EARLY WARNING: On Monday, 1 February, Dan Claasen, UNEP, introduced the report on environmental assessment and early warning (UNEP/GC.20/22) and the review of the Mercure satellite communication system (UNEP/GC.20/30). He identified the focus of the subprogramme area as building UNEP's capacity to link environmental observations to assessment and early warning in a timely manner. CUBA underscored the importance of environmental assessment and early warning in preventing natural disasters. The US requested UNEP to further its work in data collection and analysis and communication with decision makers.

Mercury Satellite Communication System: On Tuesday, 2 February, POLAND, NORWAY, COLOMBIA and BELGIUM, among others, reiterated the importance of the Mercure satellite communication system, and inquired about maintenance costs, savings from the project and in-kind contributions. NIGERIA requested UNEP to facilitate developing countries' use of the system. SWITZERLAND,

supported by AUSTRIA, pointed out errors in the ACABQ report regarding Mercure, and expressed concern over criticism of the system's efficiency.

The decision, *inter alia*: encourages the Executive Director to further enhance the cost-effectiveness of the Mercure network by achieving optimal cost integration with the UN global telecommunications system; requests the Government of Kenya to facilitate the implementation of voice telephony on Mercure to UNEP and other UN agencies in Nairobi; encourages the Executive Director to continue to make the UNEPnet/Mercure system available for utilization by the UN telecommunications system; and requests the Executive Director to ensure a review and comprehensive cost-benefit analysis of the UNEPnet/Mercure system.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT, LAW AND IMPLEMENTATION: On Tuesday, 2 February, Shafqat Kakakhel, introduced the subprogramme, noting that it integrates policy, interagency affairs, law, economics and resource mobilization, and strengthens UNEP's analysis, development, coordination and funding of environmental policy.

Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities: Regarding the Global Programme of Action (GPA) for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (UNEP/GC.20/32), CUBA, ICELAND, KENYA and the US supported an international workshop to address sewage pollution of coastal zones. NIGERIA called for enhancing developing countries' capacity to protect marine environments and implement policy. Regarding GPA implementation, the US called for technical exchange centers, an improved GPA steering committee and partnerships with NGOs and the private sector. In considering the draft decision, CANADA called for strengthening the Regional Seas Programme. The EU proposed consideration of other ongoing processes and cooperation with other agencies.

The decision, *inter alia*: stresses the need for urgent measures to expedite implementation of the GPA; urges establishment of the Hague Coordination Office; calls upon governments to ensure the development of the clearinghouse mechanism for the GPA; requests consideration of the feasibility of a global conference to consider sewage; decides to undertake a review of the status of implementation of the GPA; and recommends national and regional partnership meetings.

Biosafety: Many speakers commended UNEP's work on biosafety (UNEP/GC.20/33). EGYPT, ZIMBABWE, BURUNDI and ETHIOPIA stressed the importance of capacity building in developing countries. NIGERIA called for efforts to enhance benefits and limit risks from biotechnology. The draft decision requests the Executive Director to, *inter alia*: support appropriate development of the UNEP International Technical Guidelines for Safety in Biotechnology; assist governments in implementing the forthcoming protocol on biosafety; mobilize resources to support developing countries and countries with economies in transition to prepare effective national biosafety frameworks; promote greater awareness of biosafety issues at the regional and subregional levels; and support establishment of risk-assessment capabilities in collaboration with the Convention on Biological Diversity Secretariat.

Freshwater: On freshwater (UNEP/GC.20/21), INDONESIA called for: technical and financial assistance for construction of water resources in developing countries; traditional low-cost water collection and use options; and a stronger UNEP role in integrated freshwater management. The EU noted the importance of the "polluter pays" principle, and encouraged UNEP to develop regional and subregional cooperation for sustainable water management. EGYPT, on behalf of the African Group, emphasized the importance of freshwater access, and called for transfer and dissemination of new technologies. TURKEY said water conflict issues should be dealt with between



countries concerned. CANADA supported strengthening of the Global Environmental Monitoring System water programme. BURKINA FASO drew attention to groundwater issues.

When the draft decision on freshwater was introduced, ETHIOPIA, supported by KENYA, preferred that the decision "endorse" rather than "take note of" a proposed framework for UNEP's freshwater strategy. AUSTRALIA and EGYPT opposed, and TURKEY proposed deleting reference to the strategy. EGYPT noted that the decision as drafted would enlarge the UNEP mandate beyond that of the environment, and said that bringing complicated issues under the decision could open a Pandora's Box for UNEP. The EU proposed adding reference to the role CSD-6 played in defining UNEP's role in freshwater.

The decision on freshwater takes note of the proposed framework for UNEP's freshwater strategy and stresses the role of UNEP in the management of water. It requests UNEP to: collaborate with governments, UN agencies, NGOs and IGOs; identify in country expertise on freshwater and promote intergovernmental cooperation; promote transfer of environmentally sound freshwater management through the International Environment Technology Center (IETC); and identify key policy issues and policy options for debate and endorsement at the 21st GC.

Coral Reefs: The draft decision on the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) endorses enhanced cooperation within the UN and calls for, *inter alia*: assessment of UNEP experiences in implementing ICRI; enhanced cooperation within the UN system; and funding for implementing ICRI.

Regional Seas Programme for the East Central Pacific: The draft decision on the establishment of a Regional Seas Programme for the East Central Pacific endorses the action taken to establish the Programme and invites governments of Central America to endorse an expert review of a proposed convention on the protection of the marine and coastal environment in the East Central Pacific region.

TECHNOLOGY, INDUSTRY AND ECONOMICS: On Tuesday, 2 February, Kakakhel noted the subprogramme's goal to: reorient production and consumption patterns towards cleaner and safer technologies that conserve water and energy, and prevent pollution and reduce risks.

UNEP Chemicals Programme: Many delegations expressed support for UNEP's activities in chemicals management. The US, AUSTRALIA and NEW ZEALAND noted possible synergies among chemicals conventions, and ICELAND suggested an umbrella mechanism for all chemicals agreements. THAILAND emphasized the importance of Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers. On Wednesday, 3 February, the COW considered three chemicals-related decisions relating to: chemicals management, Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and the PIC Convention.

Chemicals Management: On further measures to reduce risks from hazardous chemicals, the EU proposed welcoming further work on the topic at the 21st GC. The US cautioned against this, as it may not be necessary to hold discussions then and the reference would necessitate a debate on chemicals and attendance of chemicals experts. The decision invites the Executive Director to consider preparing a general policy discussion, if deemed appropriate, on chemicals management at the 21st GC.

Persistent Organic Pollutants: Regarding POPs, TANZANIA, supported by CHINA, noted developing country needs, including financial and technical support, data collection, public awareness and POPs alternatives. EGYPT, on behalf of the African Group, called for: inventory compilation assistance; development of national action plans; training and awareness building; and destruction of existing stockpiles. The decision on POPs, *inter alia*: welcomes the progress of the POPs negotiations; requests the Executive Director to continue taking actions as requested in GC decision 19/13 C, including im-

mediate action; and calls upon governments, IGOs and NGOs to consider providing resources to support the negotiation of a POPs convention through contributions to the POPs Club.

PIC Convention: The decision, *inter alia*: welcomes the PIC Convention; recommends that the UNGA endorse linkages between UNEP and the PIC Convention; authorizes the Executive Director and the FAO to convene further negotiating sessions until the first COP; calls for contributions to the interim trust fund; and calls upon countries with programmes for regulating chemicals to provide technical assistance to other countries.

Economics, Trade and Financial Services: Regarding economics, trade and financial services (UNEP/GC.20/43), NIGERIA called for assistance in enabling developing countries to assess environmental impacts of trade liberalization policies. The US called for economic instruments and incentives to promote sustainable development. CANADA emphasized a mutually supportive role for trade and the environment. The EU requested UNEP to increase transparency in discussions on trade and environment and to enhance work with the WTO.

The draft decision on this topic requests the Executive Director to, *inter alia*: assist countries to integrate environmental consideration with development planning and decision-making; provide training in environmental impact assessment and valuation, natural resource accounting, and relevant economic instruments; examine policy options for addressing challenges of integrating environmental considerations in trade policies; and cooperate with other international organizations working on trade and the environment, including the WTO and UNCTAD.

Specialized Offices: Regarding the functioning of UNEP's specialized offices (UNEP/GC.20/29), JAPAN emphasized the role of the Environment Fund in enhancing IETC activities. In consideration of the draft decision on functioning of specialized offices of UNEP, the EU suggested trade issues be given priority, together with cleaner production and technology transfer. The draft decision endorses steps to bring greater efficiency through synergies between UNEP units addressing technology transfer and urban activities, and related economic and trade aspects and requests the Executive Director to give priority to issues of trade and environment and the cleaner production and transfer of environmentally sound technologies.

Global Environmental Issues and Human Needs: This draft decision notes cooperation between the World Bank and UNEP. The decision: underscores that sustainable development depends on a healthy local, national, regional and global environment and emphasizes UNEP's role in promoting this; requests consideration of global and environmental issues in a holistic and synergistic policy framework; requests recognition of the importance of scientific understanding, identification of innovative policies, political will and public commitment, and coordination of national and international institutions for successful policy implementation.

REGIONAL COOPERATION AND REPRESENTATION: Kakakhel said the main task of this subprogramme is to advance the regional environmental agenda and enhance regional environmental delivery. EGYPT, on behalf of the African Group, called for the regional office to: coordinate; provide technical, legal and policy advice; promote environmentally sound technologies; formulate GEF projects; and provide environmental assessment and monitoring. SENEGAL, BURKINA FASO, the EU, CHINA, VIETNAM, INDONESIA, KENYA, the CZECH REPUBLIC, MEXICO and NIGERIA supported strengthening regional offices. CUBA called for an integrated approach to policy in and among regional offices. BENIN, BURKINA FASO and NIGERIA supported a separate African regional office, as agreed to in GC decision 16/1, and BENIN appealed to host the regional office. CHINA and KENYA called for sufficient



funding for regional offices to undertake activities. AUSTRALIA and KENYA supported a coordinating office in Nairobi to promote regional coordination.

The draft decision on functioning of regional offices and proposed measures for the strengthening of regionalization and decentralization was adopted without amendment. The decision welcomes the Executive Director's report and proposed measures on the functioning of regional offices and requests the Executive Director to continue strengthening regionalization and decentralization, while maintaining the central coordinating role of the programme headquarters in Nairobi.

Support to Africa: In discussing the draft decision on support to Africa on Wednesday, 3 February, the EU asked to remove reference to assistance "in the field," noting that this is the task of development organizations, not UNEP. The decision notes that African countries are vulnerable to environmental concerns, identifies the lack of national legislation and institutional arrangements as a major problem, and affirms the need to strengthen the technical capacities of African country representatives to COPs. The decision also requests that the Executive Director: enhance cooperation and coordination through support for the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, facilitation of cooperation within African organizations and promotion of programmatic coherence among convention implementation activities; continue providing technical, financial, legal and policy assistance to Africa; assist Africa in formulating GEF projects; strengthen UNEP's role in assessment and monitoring in Africa; and place high priority to implementing the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD).

ENVIRONMENTAL CONVENTIONS: Jorge Illueca, Division of Environmental Conventions, introduced the role of UNEP in promoting convention collaboration (UNEP/GC.20/16) and programme support by UNEP to environmental conventions (UNEP/GC.20/17). TUNISIA, supported by the US and SENEGAL, expressed concern that the Regional Seas Programme did not appear in UNEP's operational chart. AUSTRALIA, with the US, JAPAN, the EU, CANADA and INDONESIA, urged a stronger focus on the International Coral Reef Initiative. MEXICO, with AUSTRALIA, CUBA, the US, ARGENTINA and NIGERIA, emphasized environmental convention coordination, although JAPAN urged that programmes be identified by Conferences of the Parties to these conventions. AUSTRALIA suggested that formal arrangements with convention secretariats were a low priority. The US suggested that a high-level meeting concerning the East Central Pacific was premature. This topic was also addressed in the Plenary, which adopted draft decisions on this topic.

COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC INFORMATION: Tore Brevik, Director, UNEP Communications and Public Information, underscored the subprogramme's objectives to, *inter alia*: enhance the status of UNEP, present UNEP as a dynamic organization, enhance UNEP's status in donor countries and the media, and build support for UNEP in donor countries. CUBA emphasized the importance of environmental education and training. AUSTRALIA suggested that UNEP focus on timely information rather than public affairs activities. SENEGAL stressed training and public awareness programmes. BURUNDI opposed overemphasis on ultramodern communication.

UNEP ACTIVITIES UNDER THE GEF: Ahmed Djoghla, GEF Coordinating Office, introduced the action plan on complementarity between UNEP activities under the GEF (UNEP/GC.20/44). He highlighted: complementarity between UNEP and GEF activities based on additionality, synergy and integration; and a timeframe for implementation of the work programme. EGYPT, on behalf of the African Group, supported strengthening UNEP's role in GEF activities, with a view to increasing GEF activities in Africa. The EU and INDONESIA supported the action plan. The US characterized UNEP's efforts to determine its best role in the GEF as symbolic of the

foresight and direction of the Executive Director, and expressed faith that this will carry over to UNEP's progressive emergence in other areas. INDONESIA said UNEP should continue to strengthen collaboration with the GEF on freshwater, climate change, biological diversity and desertification. CHINA proposed that, *inter alia*: the share of UNEP funds within the GEF be increased; UNEP conduct activities at the national level; UNEP support developing countries' action on the environment through the GEF; and UNEP's role within the GEF be strengthened. Chair Leandro Arellano explained that the action plan on complementarity will be forwarded to the next GEF Council meeting.

PLENARY

The Plenary, co-chaired by President Miklós and Vice-President Jean P. Nsengiyumva, met six times to discuss policy issues, the UNGA's resolutions, results of the UNGA's consideration of the UN Task Force's recommendations, linkages among and support to conventions, and preparations for CSD-7. On Tuesday, 2 February, President Miklós announced the establishment of a negotiating group, which was chaired by G. Storm (Netherlands). The Negotiating Group met throughout the week to negotiate draft decisions for submission to the Plenary.

POLICY ISSUES: On Monday and Tuesday, 1-2 February, the Plenary discussed policy issues, after Vice-President Nsengiyumva proposed that the four subitems be discussed together. The state of the environment addresses the Global Environment Outlook (GEO) (UNEP/GC.20/3) and the environmental situation in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories (UNEP/GC.20/4). Emerging policy issues include promotion of access to information (UNEP/GC.20/45), environmental law (UNEP/GC.20/5), and reform of the global environmental information exchange network (INFOTERRA) (UNEP/GC.20/46). Coordination and cooperation within and outside the UN addresses institution building (UNEP/GC.20/6), the work of the Interagency Environment Coordination Group (UNEP/GC.20/7), UNEP's role in the GEF (UNEP/GC.20/8), environmental emergencies (UNEP/GC.20/9), the role of women in environment and development (UNEP/GC.20/10), and support for implementing the CCD (UNEP/GC.20/11). Governance of UNEP includes a report of the High-Level Committee of Ministers and Officials and the Committee of Permanent Representatives (UNEP/GC.20/12) and an assessment of the functioning of the Secretariat (UNEP/GC.20/13).

State of the Environment: The EU, the CZECH REPUBLIC, CUBA and CHINA supported the second Global Environment Outlook (GEO-2) report. ARGENTINA supported broadening participation and efficient networking in GEO-2 report preparation. CANADA supported stronger links between GEO and other UNEP assessment work, a longer term funding mechanism or strategy and more focused, consistent data. He noted that collaborating centers, such as the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), are learning to prepare regional assessments. PALESTINE said the Executive Director's report on Palestine failed to address Israeli practices against the Palestinian environment and requested a more exhaustive report to address these problems. ISRAEL emphasized scarcity of resources, particularly water, and noted cooperation with Palestinians to preserve the environment.

On Thursday, 4 February, the Plenary adopted draft decisions submitted by the Negotiating Group on the state of the environment issues addressing GEO and the environmental situation in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories (UNEP/GC.20/L.1/Rev.1) On the latter, IRAN indicated that their support for the decision did not constitute recognition of the State of Israel.

On GEO, the decision, *inter alia*: urges consideration of GEO-2 findings in developing and implementing UNEP's environmental assessment, management actions, policies and programmes; calls for submission to the 21st GC, a GEO user profile and qualitative analysis of GEO-1 and GEO-2; requests UNEP to collaborate with UNDP, the



World Bank, World Resources Institute (WRI) and other relevant organizations in the next WRI report to be published in December 2000; and urges UNDP, FAO and the World Bank to collaborate to get a more complete picture of sustainable development.

The decision addressing the environmental situation in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories: supports UNEP activities carried out in collaboration with the Office of the UN Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories; calls for continuing participation in the activities of the multilateral working groups of the Middle East Peace Process; and calls for a comprehensive report on the environmental situation to be submitted to the 21st GC.

Emerging Policy Issues: The EU and the RUSSIAN FEDERATION highlighted UNEP's important role in environmental law. CUBA welcomed a new environmental law programme and continued efforts to decentralize, particularly in relation to education and training. The CZECH REPUBLIC supported strengthening involvement in environmental law, training and education. The EU called for a step-by-step approach to funding for public information services. JAMAICA stressed free access to environmental information. The US, NEW ZEALAND and COLOMBIA opposed a global right-to-know convention.

On Wednesday, 3 February, the Plenary adopted, without amendment, the draft decision on the Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law Beyond the Year 2000 (UNEP/GC.20/L.2/Rev.1.) The draft decision, *inter alia*: supports a process for preparing a new Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law, and convening a meeting of government legal experts in the year 2000; and calls for assistance, on request, to developing countries and countries in this field.

On Thursday, 4 February, the Plenary adopted draft decisions on: the promotion of access to information, public participation in decision making and access to justice in environmental matters; and reform of INFOTERRA (UNEP/GC.20/L.2/Add.1/Rev.1). On access to information, the draft decision calls on the Executive Director to: consult with governments and international organizations to seek appropriate ways of building capacity in and enhancing access to environmental information, public participation in decision making and access to justice in environmental matters; study models of national legislation, policies and guidelines; and submit a report to the 21st GC.

On reform of INFOTERRA, the decision, *inter alia*: underscores the importance of the right-to-know principle; highlights the need to secure the participation of all stakeholders; and requests the Executive Director to develop a concrete plan for establishing a restructured INFOTERRA and to consult with governments on the appropriateness of launching a revitalized INFOTERRA at a global conference in 2000.

UNEP Governance: On Thursday, 4 February, the Plenary adopted the draft decision on governance of UNEP (UNEP/GC.20/L.6/Rev.1). Regarding the report on the work of GC subsidiary bodies, the decision recalls decision 19/1 and the Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of UNEP, and decision 19/32 in which the GC decided that the governance structure would be reviewed at the 21st session. Regarding assessment of the functioning of the UNEP Secretariat, the decision notes the CPR's report concerning the Secretariat and welcomes its recommendations, and requests keeping the CPR informed on progress made.

Coordination and Cooperation Within and Outside the UN: The RUSSIAN FEDERATION highlighted UNEP's important role in: cooperating with existing convention secretariats; environmental information and early warning systems; environmental emergencies; and being an "ideas man" in the GEF. NORWAY urged strategic partnerships, particularly in relation to centers of excellence; strengthened roles for NGOs; and work on cleaner production and consumption patterns and legal instruments. BRAZIL opposed NGO participation

in negotiating and drafting bodies, but supported their involvement in implementation. The EU called for closer cooperation with the WTO. The EU, IRAN and INDIA underscored the need to support the role of women. The EU, with NORWAY, SWITZERLAND, CHINA, INDONESIA and POLAND, supported an enhanced role of UNEP within the GEF. The US emphasized that UNEP's role in the GEF should be its comparative advantage. INDONESIA emphasized strengthening UNEP's institutional capacity building activities, including support to developing countries for legal redress, emergency response and early warning capacities. POLAND expressed anxiety concerning the establishment of the Environment Management Group (EMG), preferring a more detailed analysis of failure within the Inter-Agency Environment Coordination Group. JAPAN and IRAN urged further elaboration of the EMG concept. JAMAICA stressed strengthening the Joint Environment Unit to deal with environmental emergencies. POLAND expressed skepticism regarding UNEP's ability to address emergencies, but proposed an expert roster list for consultation. The EU and NEW ZEALAND discouraged the establishment of an environmental emergency stand-by team. The OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS offered help to implement relevant GC decisions. BURKINA FASO said a special consultation on drought and desertification was urgent and, with the REPUBLIC OF KOREA, emphasized the transfer of environmentally sound technology. GLOBAL LEGISLATORS ORGANIZATION FOR A BALANCED ENVIRONMENT (GLOBE) noted its liaison with UNEP to monitor the progress of environmental conventions.

On Friday, 5 February, the Plenary adopted, without amendment, draft decisions regarding coordination and cooperation within and outside the UN (UNEP/GC.20/L.3/Rev.1 and UNEP/GC.20/L.3/Add.1/Rev.1). On UNEP policy and advisory services in key areas of institution building, the decision requests strengthening the Secretariat to provide policy and advisory services, and strengthening cooperation with governments and other relevant organizations in activities related to these services.

On the GEF, the decision supports, *inter alia*: the conclusion of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between UNEP and UNDP on joint collaboration in the GEF's cross-cutting area of land degradation; a strengthened role for UNEP in the GEF; and the proposed action plan on complementarity between the activities undertaken by UNEP under the GEF and its submission to the GEF Council in May 1999.

On further improvement of the international response to environmental emergencies, the draft decision, calls for, *inter alia*: further collaboration between UNEP and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in assisting countries, particularly developing countries, affected by environmental disasters; strengthening collaboration with the Joint Environment Unit of UNEP and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; developing appropriate linkages between UNEP's work on environmental emergencies and its overall work on environmental assessments and early warning; and governments and international organizations to contribute to the Trust Fund for Environmental Emergencies.

On the role of women in environment and development, the decision supports: continuing efforts made by UNEP after the Fourth World Conference on Women; carrying out more activities in the work programme targeted at women; assisting governments to empower women to participate in decision making; and extending the network of gender focal points.

On land degradation and support for implementing the Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD), particularly in Africa, the draft decision calls for, *inter alia*: support to African countries in carrying out the CCD's provisions; securing GEF support; strengthening inter-agency collaboration; and assisting countries affected by land degradation in preparing projects for GEF and other financing agencies.



On support for cooperation between the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment and UNEP through the regional offices for West Asia and Africa, the decision supports, *inter alia*, regionalization and decentralization through increased involvement and participation of regional ministerial councils, and the establishment of an appropriate mechanism to support the implementation and coordination of regional programmes in the Arab region.

A decision supporting implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the UN system and extrabudgetary resources to promote practical application of methodologies for such integration is also included.

Another decision calls on the Executive Director, in light of the UN Secretary-General's decision to establish an EMG, to consider the need for an interagency environment coordination group.

ISSUES ARISING FROM UNGA RESOLUTIONS: On Tuesday, 2 February, Dr. Töpfer introduced the UNGA's resolutions, highlighting, in particular, those endorsing UNEP's work and concerning trade and sustainable development. The Plenary considered the report on issues arising from the resolutions of the UNGA at its 52nd and 53rd sessions and 19th special session, specifically calling for action by UNEP (UNEP/GC.20/L.14). This report highlights UNEP's role in, *inter alia*: implementation of Agenda 21; development of international law; the CSD; trade and environment; negotiations on PIC and POPs conventions; cooperation with the GEF; creation of centers for technology transfer; developing new environmentally sound technologies; strengthening its relationship with the Convention to Combat Desertification; international cooperation to reduce the impact of El Niño; administrative arrangements with the Convention on Biological Diversity; developing strategies for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) on sustainable tourism; protecting the environment associated with the Olympics; and support for the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation.

INDIA noted that the UNGA had not formally asked the GC to respond to its agenda on environmental reforms. Dr. Töpfer responded by acknowledging that a final decision for restructuring UNEP has yet to be taken by the UNGA.

On Friday, 5 February, the Plenary adopted, without amendment, the decision on issues arising from the resolutions of the UNGA specifically calling for action by UNEP (UNEP/GC.20/L.8/Rev.1). The decision takes note of the report of the Executive Director on this subject.

REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL AND TASK FORCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS:

On Tuesday, 2 February, Dr. Töpfer introduced the report of the UN Task Force on Environment and Human Settlements (UNEP/GC.20/L.9), whose recommendations include, *inter alia*: better interagency coordination, intergovernmental development and integration of NGO knowledge; increased information and assessment requirements; and streamlining and development of UNON. He said the Secretary-General welcomed the GC's views. The discussion also considered the recommendations of the Secretary-General's Report on Environment and Human Settlements. This report noted the linkages between environment, sustainable development, poverty eradication and peace making.

UNEP's coordination of environmental conventions was encouraged by NEW ZEALAND, the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, POLAND, AUSTRALIA, HUNGARY and ARGENTINA, on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC). CHINA, with NIGERIA, ARGENTINA, on behalf of GRULAC, and SWEDEN, supported a stronger role for UNEP and Habitat in Nairobi, but urged that they operate under different executive directors. The SLOVAK REPUBLIC preferred one coordinator. THAILAND, with NIGERIA and SWEDEN, supported a greater role for major groups. The US suggested that this was not a priority. The HUMAN ECOLOGY

COUNCIL urged a voice for the aged. NORWAY and CANADA called for elaborating NGO participation modalities. NEW ZEALAND, with ALGERIA and the REPUBLIC OF KOREA, endorsed the universalization of the GC membership. JAPAN questioned whether expanding GC members' authority was appropriate for UNEP's efficiency.

On Friday, 5 February, the Plenary adopted, without amendment, the decision on the results of the UNGA's consideration of the Secretary-General's report on United Nations reform: measures and proposals — environment and human settlements (UNEP/GC.20/L.9). This decision simply takes note of the recommendations of the UN Task Force on Environment and Human Settlements.

The Plenary also considered the decision on the GC's views on the report of the Secretary-General on Environment and Human Settlements (UNEP/GC.20/L.14). This decision, *inter alia*: welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on Environment and Human Settlements; notes actions by intergovernmental bodies in linking environment-related convention; welcomes the reforms of the UNEP Executive Director; supports the establishment of the EMG; welcomes enhanced coordination among secretariats of environment-related conventions; supports an annual ministerial forum; welcomes enhanced coordination with the CSD; notes the proposal for universal membership of the GC; agrees to consider the future role of the UNEP High-Level Committee of Ministers and Officials (HLCOM); welcomes UNEP's role in providing environmental advocacy to the GEF; welcomes the need to engage NGOs; and requests the Executive Director to convey these views to the Secretary-General.

BURUNDI questioned whether the UNGA President had an intention to consider the report of the Secretary-General on Environment and Human Settlements, at its current session, in a fully open and transparent manner. Despite this concern, the decision was adopted without amendment.

LINKAGES AMONG AND SUPPORT TO ENVIRONMENTAL AND ENVIRONMENT-RELATED CONVENTIONS:

On Tuesday, 2 February, the Plenary addressed enhanced coordination between environmental conventions. UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Executive-Secretary Michael Zammit Cutajar distinguished between linkages and support, noted the GEF's important role in linking programmes, emphasized linkages at the national level, and stressed UNEP's technical support to specific conventions, particularly with respect to climate change. The US noted UNEP's ability to offer support to environmental conventions, and called for more assistance to help governments build capacity to comply with conventions.

The decision (UNEP/GC.20/L.6/Rev.1) calls on States to sign, ratify and accede to conventions and protocols. It supports an intensified role for UNEP in stimulating and supporting collaboration among environmental conventions, and calls on UNEP to enhance interlinkages among scientific and information monitoring processes and to identify opportunities for synergies. The decision also requests the Executive Director: to explore areas of cooperation and suitable modalities in supporting convention implementation; to make available, on request, UNEP's technical, scientific and legal expertise; and to assist developing countries and countries with economies in transition in building capacity to implement conventions.

PREPARATIONS FOR CSD-7: On Wednesday, 3 February, the Plenary discussed preparations for CSD-7. Shafqat Kakakhel introduced the thematic issues for CSD-7: SIDS; oceans management; sustainable tourism; and sustainable production and consumption, and noted where UNEP could provide an environmental dimension to CSD-7. JoAnne DiSano, Director of the UN Division for Sustainable Development, encouraged the GC to identify a clear role for UNEP and to ensure that it had adequate resources to provide scientific and technical advice. On Friday, 5 February, the Plenary adopted, without



amendment, the draft decision on UNEP's contribution to CSD-7 (UNEP/GC.20/L.4/Rev.1). The subsequent sections highlight elements of this decision.

Small Island Developing States: NEW ZEALAND welcomed work on SIDS. MALTA, on behalf of SIDS, JAMAICA and NORWAY, highlighted the vulnerabilities of SIDS, particularly with respect to climate change. The decision recognizes the problems of SIDS and invites the Executive Director to, *inter alia*: facilitate integrated island management programmes; develop a "vulnerability index"; promote transfer of management technologies; prepare guidelines for waste minimization; promote principles for sustainable tourism; promote research into the sustainable management of terrestrial and aquatic biological diversity; promote public awareness activities; and prepare an environmental assessment of the Barbados Programme of Action for CSD-7.

Oceans Management and Marine Pollution: NEW ZEALAND, with IRAN, TUNISIA, JAPAN, BURKINA FASO, CANADA, the EU, AUSTRALIA, JAMAICA, BANGLADESH, NORWAY and MALTA, on behalf of SIDS, strongly endorsed UNEP's Regional Seas Programme. AUSTRALIA opposed using the Programme as a framework for the development of regional commissions for the sustainable development of oceans, as their mandate goes beyond that of the Regional Seas Programme. NEW ZEALAND encouraged UNEP's role in enhancing its work in relation to the environmental implications of unsustainable fishing. JAPAN and ICELAND suggested that fisheries management be undertaken by FAO. The US encouraged cooperation between UNEP and FAO. BURKINA FASO and the EU endorsed UNEP's work on land-based sources of marine pollution, with NEW ZEALAND calling for accelerated action. ICELAND and NORWAY supported a clearinghouse mechanism on marine pollution. ICELAND stressed regional cooperation and highlighted the threat of POPs to the marine ecosystem. NEW ZEALAND, with JAPAN, highlighted UNEP's work on the International Coral Reef Initiative, while INDONESIA highlighted unprecedented coral bleaching. IRAN called for focused work on addressing pollution within closed and semi-closed seas. CANADA emphasized coastal zone management.

The decision stresses the need for a strengthened Regional Seas Programme to, *inter alia*: ensure environmental considerations are taken into account in coastal area management; promote administrative and legal measures to protect the marine and coastal environment; facilitate the assessment of the marine and coastal environment; promote measures to protect endangered species and habitats; enhance UNEP's collaboration in the environmental aspects of sustainable fisheries; research critical uncertainties related to climate change; prepare and convene a high-level meeting on the global protection of the marine and coastal environment; explore the need to expand the Regional Seas Programme to new areas; and enhance linkages with the secretariats of regional agreements. The decision also: promotes cooperation with various international organizations; encourages members of the Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection to review their methods of work; stresses the need for reliable monitoring; calls on the CSD-7 to promote enhanced coordination within the UN system; and authorizes the Executive Director to finalize the report on the implementation of Chapter 17 of Agenda 21.

Another decision, on the Global Programme of Action (GPA) for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities, within the context of CSD-7: stresses the need to expedite progress on implementing the GPA; urges the Executive Director to establish The Hague Coordination Office; calls on governments to coordinate the development of the clearinghouse mechanism on the GPA; recommends that the CSD consider how to promote the early implementation of the GPA; requests the Executive Director to convene a conference on sewage; recommends creating technical working groups; calls on

the Executive Director to improve the Steering Committee on the GPA; recommends regional partnership meetings; and endorses the revitalization of the GPA.

Sustainable Tourism: IRAN urged caution in standardizing guidelines for sustainable tourism at the regional and national level and encouraged tourist education in the country of departure. BURKINA FASO urged partnerships in the field of tourism and environment and called for UNEP to provide research on ecotourism. CANADA urged synergies with the Convention on Biological Diversity's work on sustainable tourism. The EU said UNEP should continue its work on voluntary initiatives, codes of conduct for the tourism industry, and integration into relevant conventions. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA stressed, *inter alia*, distribution of benefits to local residents and technical and financial support from UNEP.

The sustainable tourism element of the decision recognizes the economic importance of tourism; notes the work by the Executive Director on sustainable tourism; requests the Executive Director to develop guiding principles for sustainable tourism and continue developing codes of conduct for the tourism sector; and invites the CSD to call on governments to integrate sustainable tourism in their national sustainable development strategies and relevant environmental conventions.

Sustainable Production and Consumption: NEW ZEALAND welcomed work on sustainable production and consumption and encouraged market-based incentives. CANADA underscored the need for UNEP to refocus its work towards sustainable consumption strategies. The EU emphasized cleaner production and innovative ways of organizing and fulfilling consumption needs and consumption patterns.

The decision acknowledges the current work being carried out in relation to cleaner technologies and cleaner production investments and further: encourages governments and industry to implement strategies such as cleaner production, green production and pollution prevention; welcomes the UNDP report on sustainable production and consumption; encourages UNEP and the CSD to develop a sustainable consumption strategy in partnership with the UNEP Youth Advisory Council; encourages the Executive Director to develop activities to promote sustainable production and consumption patterns; stresses the important role of UNEP; requests the Executive Director to elaborate guidelines on environmentally sound technologies; and welcomes the activities of UNEP in the marketing and advertising sector.

HIGH-LEVEL MINISTERIAL SEGMENT

On Thursday and Friday, 4-5 February, delegates listened to statements by ministers, senior government officials, IGOs and NGOs on, *inter alia*: general principles of environmental protection; UNEP's reform and revitalization; UNEP's five areas of concentration: environmental information, environmental convention coordination, freshwater, technology transfer and support to Africa; and budget-related issues.

Many delegates noted a renewed confidence in UNEP and optimism regarding its future, and supported restructuring and strengthening UNEP as well as the recommendations of the UN Task Force on Environment and Human Settlements. BENIN said the passion and enthusiasm of UNEP must be focused on concrete results. JAPAN said implementation of the Nairobi Declaration is essential to strengthening UNEP, but that the UN Task Force's recommendations need further consideration. KENYA, the UK, NAMIBIA and CHINA supported the strengthening of UNON. UGANDA and NIGERIA supported the ongoing UNEP restructuring, but recommended that UNEP and Habitat continue to operate as separate agencies. NEW ZEALAND said the GC must give UNEP the political support and resources it needs to move forward. ZIMBABWE emphasized government involvement in UNEP's reform. SWITZERLAND urged the GC to convey a message to the UNGA emphasizing the revitalization of



UNEP. GHANA supported universal GC membership, as it would assist in UNEP's revitalization. COLOMBIA said the duration of the GC was inadequate, called for regional ministerial meeting to set priorities, and supported the idea of an open ended GC. FINLAND underscored the importance of an increased political profile for UNEP through annual ministerial meetings and universal participation in the GC. The EU, with CHINA and HUNGARY, supported consideration of an annual ministerial forum. The WORLD BANK said all will benefit from a strong and vibrant UNEP and cited UNEP's catalytic role of bringing together scientists and policy makers as a real advantage.

Many countries, including CANADA, NIGERIA, JAMAICA, THAILAND, CHINA, the UK and FRANCE, supported the establishment of the EMG, with THAILAND, CHINA, and the UK calling for further discussion on the criteria for member selection. FINLAND emphasized integration of environmental, social and economic issues at all levels of the UN system as envisioned by the establishment of the EMG. FRANCE supported frequent ministerial forums to improve links between UNEP and the CSD. NEW ZEALAND highlighted UNEP's key role in providing environmental input to CSD-7.

On financial and budgetary issues, KENYA, MEXICO, DENMARK and POLAND called for increased financial contributions to support UNEP. The CZECH REPUBLIC said it is increasing its voluntary contribution to the Environment Fund, JAPAN assured it would maintain its contribution in 1999, the US said it hoped to increase its contributions, and SWEDEN, HUNGARY and the UK noted their ongoing contributions. CHINA said voluntary contributions should be the primary source. COLOMBIA supported the proposed budget as a minimum and said UNON's operational costs should be incorporated within the general budget of the UN. The UK emphasized adequate, stable and predictable resources particularly through the Environment Fund. CUBA characterized the budget as inadequate. SWITZERLAND called for broadening the financial base. The UK called for concise and clear advice on the budget, with specific details on output, progress reports and timely statements on achievements.

The GEF highlighted a true spirit of cooperation between the GEF and UNEP. UGANDA emphasized access to GEF funds to ensure implementation of UNEP's programmes. SWITZERLAND, CHINA and THAILAND supported strengthening UNEP's role in the GEF. INDIA welcomed input from the GEF's Scientific Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) for project implementation at the country level. The Convention to Combat Desertification noted that land degradation is a cross-cutting issue and is hence eligible for funding from the GEF.

On chemicals, many countries, including the EU, POLAND, the REPUBLIC OF KOREA, COLOMBIA, GHANA, CANADA and ICELAND, strongly supported the ongoing POPs negotiations, and FRANCE highlighted the decisive role played by UNEP. UGANDA called for UNEP support to assist developing countries to implement biosafety, POPs and PIC provisions. BRAZIL expressed his support for the biosafety protocol and the benefit sharing from the use of biodiversity and traditional knowledge. COLOMBIA, GHANA and HUNGARY welcomed the adoption of the PIC Convention. DENMARK highlighted uncontrolled dumping of chemicals in the developing world, and with the NETHERLANDS, supported a global convention on chemicals.

On trade and environment, DENMARK said strong provisions for social and environmental protection and human rights were preconditions for free trade. The NETHERLANDS and SWITZERLAND also supported linking trade and environment. BRAZIL said the provisions of global environmental conventions should not constitute non-tariff barriers to trade or access to export markets in developing countries. The EUROPEAN COMMUNITY stressed that trade and environment must be mutually supportive and encouraged UNEP to play a lead role in encouraging this. The UK supported the development of a "toolbox"

for assessing the environmental impacts of trade liberalization. He also said UNEP should command respect on an equal footing with the WTO and urged UNEP to participate in the upcoming WTO High-Level Symposium on Trade and Environment in March this year. The WTO noted Dr. Töpfer's invitation to give a keynote speech at this event, stressing the WTO's interest in cooperating with UNEP, and highlighting that, despite progress on developing linkages between trade and environment, more work was required.

Regarding development issues, UGANDA and BURKINA FASO emphasized interlinkages between development and the environment and said the environment cannot be addressed without also addressing poverty alleviation. BOTSWANA highlighted the challenge to the international community of linking natural resources and human settlement. MOROCCO highlighted economic interests influencing decision making and consumption patterns as causes of environmental deterioration. The WORLD BANK noted the link between poverty and environment, and said the policy of "grow now and pay later" has resulted in high environmental costs. The HOLY SEE said environmental stewardship goes beyond state boundaries. BRAZIL and INDIA said UNEP should take into account the circumstances and requirements of developing countries. PAKISTAN, TANZANIA, IRAN and KENYA called for strengthening capacity and environmental institutions in developing countries. South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) encouraged collaboration with UNEP in dialogue with industry to develop clean technologies. IRAN emphasized, *inter alia*, alternative and renewable energy resources and clean energy production.

CANADA, CUBA, BURKINA FASO, SWEDEN and the HOLY SEE praised and supported youth involvement in environmental protection and sustainable development issues. NAMIBIA urged governments to embrace NGOs and the private sector as partners in development. SWEDEN emphasized empowering women to participate in decision making. SAMOA called upon UNEP to transfer technology, build capacity, create public awareness and carry out demonstration projects in SIDS. DENMARK emphasized the importance of NGOs and citizens and, noting the Aarhus Convention on public access to information, called on UNEP to disseminate the value of this convention. The UNECE offered to share its experiences to guide other countries with respect to the Aarhus Convention. CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS (CSO) called for the establishment of a UNEP liaison office for civil society, welcomed reform of INFOTERRA as a vehicle for promoting access to environmental information, and urged UNEP to engage civil society in developing environmental law.

FINLAND emphasized, *inter alia*, strengthening monitoring, assessment and early warning systems. The WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION pointed to its cooperation with UNEP in the preparation of GEO-1 and GEO-2.

CANADA underscored the importance of freshwater management. MONACO and TUNISIA stressed the importance of the protection of the marine environment and highlighted regional work in the Mediterranean. SWEDEN identified water and its conservation as one of UNEP's most important tasks.

CUBA, TUNISIA, THAILAND, TANZANIA and others supported strengthening regional offices. INDIA called for clearly defined responsibilities for regional offices, taking into account developing country concerns. The ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND PACIFIC (ESCAP) highlighted ongoing cooperation between UNEP and ESCAP to strengthen regional cooperation. The SACEP highlighted land degradation and conservation of natural resources as major areas of concern in the South Asia region.

The SUDAN, NIGERIA, UGANDA, KENYA, NIGERIA, FRANCE, BURKINA FASO, BENIN and the UK emphasized enhanced support for Africa and many also called for strengthening Africa's regional office. KENYA highlighted monitoring and, with



ZIMBABWE, land degradation, forest preservation, integrated management of freshwater and chemicals. The ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY called for adequate allocations for each regional office and hoped that UNEP would help African countries build national plans to address environmental concerns.

BRAZIL underscored UNEP's scientific, as well as managerial character, and said UNEP should alert the international community to new environmental threats and promote negotiation of new environmental conventions. BOTSWANA, THAILAND, NIGERIA and FINLAND emphasized collaboration and coordination among environmental conventions, with FINLAND noting that increased collaboration could also contribute to capacity building in developing countries. The UK, CHINA and THAILAND noted that UNEP could contribute scientific, technical and legal support. The NETHERLANDS encouraged the development of a convention on environmental crimes. The UNFCCC Secretariat discussed the outcomes of COP-4 and the work to be done at the next two COPs, including implementation of the Kyoto Protocol. SRI LANKA encouraged UNEP to provide assistance to help developing countries implement environmental conventions.

On oceans, SAMOA welcomed UNEP's involvement in reviewing the Barbados Plan of Action on the Sustainable Development of SIDS, and requested that UNEP's input to CSD-7 be first circulated to SIDS governments for review. The UK urged UNEP to be a more effective source for action on oceans and supported revitalizing the Regional Seas Programme in collaboration with other organizations. FRANCE emphasized that the Regional Seas Programme be based on coordination, not centralization, and called attention to the rapid degradation of coral reefs and its impact on the environment and human life, particularly in SIDS. The INTERGOVERNMENTAL FORUM ON FORESTS (IFF) invited UNEP to identify the range and type of contributions it could make to the IFF process and called for assistance to developing countries to incorporate environmental dimensions into their policies for sustainable forest management. He underscored the needs of low forest cover countries, particularly in developing countries, and appealed to African States to actively participate in the IFF process.

MINISTERIAL ROUNDTABLE: On Friday, 5 February, an informal ministerial roundtable was convened under the chairmanship of President Miklós. Ministers and high-level governmental officials emphasized, *inter alia*: developing an international energy organization; establishing green tax systems; the spiritual concerns for the loss of species and the social concerns of desertification; environmental concerns of overfishing and the general draw-down of natural resources; the importance of environmental education and the role of civil society; and the importance of integrating environmental concerns in trade discussions.

CLOSING PLENARY

Rapporteur Hossein Fadaei presented, and the Plenary adopted, the report of the meeting (UNEP/GC.20/L.11) and the report of the High-Level Segment (UNEP/GC.20/L.11/Add.1). EGYPT, on behalf of the African Group, thanked everyone for the cordial atmosphere. COLOMBIA read a message from the Minister of Environment regarding the upcoming meeting on biosafety in Cartagena and invited everyone to attend. BANGLADESH, on behalf of the G-77/CHINA, conveyed sincere appreciation to the Bureau, the Secretariat and Dr. Töpfer for steering the GC to a successful conclusion. JAPAN, on behalf of the Asian and the Asia Pacific Group, offered thanks and identified the task at hand is the implementation of decisions. ITALY, on behalf of the Western Europe and Others Group (WEOG), commended Dr. Töpfer's efforts and extended WEOG's full support to UNEP. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION thanked everyone for a successful meeting. ARGENTINA, on behalf of GRULAC, stressed the importance of the Nairobi Declaration.

Dr. Töpfer expressed gratitude to all who helped to create an atmosphere of dialogue and fair compromise, and underscored the importance of commitment to implementation. He presented President Miklós with a certificate of appreciation for his leadership at the 20th GC. KENYA thanked everyone for attending the meeting and Dr. Töpfer for his efforts in strengthening UNON. In his closing remarks, President Miklós underscored the importance of recalling the spirit of environment and life that is behind all of the documents, and hoped the same spirit would be retained at UNON. He declared the meeting closed at 8:55 pm.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE UNEP GOVERNING COUNCIL

UNEP'S NEW LEASE ON LIFE: "Reinvigorate," "reform" and "operationalize" have emerged as three key themes of the 20th Session of the UNEP Governing Council. The five-day meeting demonstrated restored faith in UNEP as the prominent UN agency with the responsibility for the environment. Despite lengthy debate before agreement could be reached on UNEP's finances, the spirit of optimism prevailed and allowed UNEP to go forward with a workable budget. Based on past tensions where some governments entirely withdrew their funding, UNEP Executive Director Dr. Klaus Töpfer must take heart that his organization is on a path to recovery.

THE MALADY: As little as two years ago, UNEP was diagnosed with the near terminal disease of *irrelevantitis*. A recurring theme at UNEP meetings has been that part of UNEP's problems have and still do relate to its location in Africa. Communications and security problems are often cited. To some extent, these concerns are reflected in the fact that none of the secretariats for the Rio conventions are located in Nairobi, despite UNEP's presence. On the other hand, comments by some delegates at this session of the Governing Council suggest that UNEP's problems were more of a psychological nature — UNEP lacked inspiration.

Many still recall the dramatic events of "Black Friday" at the last Governing Council when delegates could not agree on a proposal for a high-level committee to provide guidance to UNEP. The officials who met in Geneva in March and in Nairobi again as the Governing Council resumed its session in April 1997 provided a much needed intravenous drip. They agreed to establish a High-Level Committee of Ministers and Officials and adopted the Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of UNEP. This Declaration identified UNEP as the principal UN body in the field of the environment and as an authoritative advocate for the global environment. This huge psychological boost placed UNEP on the road to recovery.

THE ROAD TO RECOVERY: The next step in the treatment was the appointment of a new Executive Director. Throughout the week, there was nary a moment without an ode to the significance of Dr. Klaus Töpfer's appointment as Executive Director. There was an overall feeling and understanding that "now UNEP has a boss." Some even went so far as call his work "miraculous." His visions for a new UNEP order, including strengthened regional offices, greater involvement in the GEF, improved coordination among environmental conventions, and restructuring and rebuilding the organization, have been widely welcomed as "progressive emergence."

However, the potential for relapse is ever present. The establishment of an Environment Management Group (EMG), while widely supported by many delegates, is still being viewed with some skepticism by others and may undermine UNEP's progress. Some delegates wanted to see a detailed explanation of the EMG's modalities and mode of operation before lending their support. For some delegates with long-term memories, the development of the EMG gives them a sense of *déjà vu*. They recall the establishment of the Environment Coordination Board (ECB) after the Stockholm Conference. Some fear that, like the ECB, the EMG will "step on the toes" of other agencies.



FOOTING THE MEDICAL BILL: As usual, budgetary issues were the major focus. The incorporation of UNEP's administrative functions with the United Nations Offices in Nairobi while generally welcomed as a strategic move to streamline and rationalize the organization, met with some voices of dissent. This dissent appeared to be an expression of concern over the lack of transparency and detail within the budget papers. Shuffling programme elements between organizations had some delegates thinking that they were observing a "pea and shell game." Nevertheless, after many hours of intense negotiations in small working groups, the budget was approved. The five-day meeting, as opposed to the previous two-week format, helped officials focus on the matters at hand.

SPEECH THERAPY: The ongoing communication problems with the outside world continue to hinder UNEP's full recovery. For example, many delegates underpinned the importance of ensuring that the Mercure satellite system is used to its full potential. Delicate negotiations with the Kenyan Government over communications security and fees for service are still under way. Nevertheless, the strong Governing Council endorsement of the Mercure system gives Dr. Töpfer a strong mandate to improve communications.

MEETING OF THE SURGEONS: The High-Level Segment drew a strong contingency of ministers and senior officials from all corners of the world. Never have so many ministers descended upon the Governing Council, suggesting that UNEP is "alive and well." Although some delegates were dismayed at the "speech marathon," which continued for two full days, a few innovative ideas emerged from the "hot air." Expanding the Regional Seas Programmes to include fisheries, placing UNEP on an equal footing with World Trade Organization, and developing global conventions on chemicals and environmental crime were identified as "breaths of fresh air." Ministers and delegates warmly welcomed the innovative and informal roundtable discussion on the last day.

FIT FOR LIFE? Whether the patient has made a full recovery still remains to be seen. Clearly the will to live is there but the rebuilding process has a long way to go. UNEP has yet to prove that it is able to show some concrete accomplishments. The next Governing Council will provide the opportunity to review whether the patient is fit and ready to run the millennium marathon.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR

1999 MEETINGS OF THE CSD AD HOC INTERSECTORAL WORKING GROUPS: The *Ad hoc* Working Group on Consumption and Production Patterns and Tourism and Sustainable Development will meet in New York on 22-26 February 1999. The *Ad hoc* Working Group on Oceans and Seas and the Review of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States will meet in New York from 1-5 March 1999. For information contact: Andrey Vasilyev, UN Division for Sustainable Development; tel: +1 (212) 963-5949; fax: +1 (212) 963-4260; e-mail: vasilyev@un.org; Internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/>

EXPERT MEETING ON INDICATORS: The Fifth Expert Group Meeting on Indicators of Sustainable Development will be held from 24-25 March 1999 in New York. For more information contact: Ms. Birgitte Bryld, Focal Point for Indicators of Sustainable Development; tel: +1 (212) 963-8400; fax: +1 (212) 963-1267; e-mail: bryld@un.org

SEVENTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (CSD-7): CSD-7 will be held from 19-30 April 1999 in New York. For more information contact: Andrey Vasilyev, UN Division for Sustainable Development; tel: +1 (212) 963-5949; fax: +1 (212) 963-4260; e-mail: vasilyev@un.org; Internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/>

FOURTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON WASTE WATER: The conference "Managing the Wastewater Resource, Ecological Engineering for Wastewater Treatment" will be held in Norway from 7-11 June 1999. Abstracts are due by 20 February 1999 and manuscripts by 31 March 1999. For more information, send e-mail to: Ecoeng99@jordforsk.nlh.no; Internet: <http://www.org.nlh.no/ecoeng99/>

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CONSUMPTION: "Down to Earth — An International Conference on Consumption and the Consumer" will be held in Hampshire, UK, from 22-24 September 1999. It will be hosted by the Project Integra, and Hampshire, and supported by the United Nations Environment and Development-UK Committee, Onyx Aurora - Integrated Waste Management, and Hampshire County Council. For more information contact: Conference Administration, Index Communications Meeting Services; tel: +44 (0) 1794 511331/2, e-mail: icms@dial.pipex.com.

WTO COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND ENVIRONMENT: The CTE will meet from 18-19 February, 29-30 June, 12-13 October 1999 in Geneva. A Special Session of the General Council for the Third Ministerial Conference will be held from 25-26 February 1999. The Third Ministerial Conference will be held from 30 November - 3 December 1999. For more information, go to their WWW site: <http://www.wto.org/wto/environ/environm.htm>.

CONFERENCE ON THE SOCIAL, GENDER AND ENVIRONMENT ASSESSMENTS OF THE WTO NEGOTIATIONS: This meeting will be held from 5-7 February 1999 in Brussels, Belgium. The International Coalition of Development Action (ICDA), World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF-International), Oxfam UK, and Greenpeace are jointly hosting this meeting. For information contact ICDA at 115 Rue Stévin, B-1040 Bruxelles Belgium; fax: +32-2 230-0348, e-mail: icda@skynet.be. Internet: <http://www.icda.be>.

WTO HIGH-LEVEL SYMPOSIUM ON TRADE AND ENVIRONMENT: This symposium will take place on 15-16 March 1999 in Geneva. For more information, contact Jan-Erik Jorensen, WTO Trade and Environment Division; tel: +41-22 739-5383; Internet: <http://www.wto.org/wto/environ/environm.htm>.

WTO HIGH-LEVEL SYMPOSIUM ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT: This symposium will take place on 18-19 March 1999 in Geneva. For more information, contact the WTO Development Division; tel: +41-22 739-5119; Internet: <http://www.wto.org/wto/develop/develop.htm>.

GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY COUNCIL MEETING: The next meeting of the GEF Council will be held from 5-7 May 1999 in Washington, DC. It will be preceded by an NGO Consultation on 4 May 1999. For more information contact: Hutton G. Archer, GEF Secretariat; tel: +1 (202) 458-7117; fax: +1 (202) 522-3240; Internet: <http://www.gefweb.com>.

UNCTAD TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD: The 20th Executive Session of the Trade and Development Board will be held on Friday, 5 February 1999. The Board's 46th session (Preparatory process for UNCTAD X) will be held from 18-29 October 1999. For more information, contact: Secretary of the Board, Intergovernmental Support Services; tel: +41 22 907 57 27; fax: +41 22 907 00 56; e-mail: awni.behnam@unctad.org

COMMISSION ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS: The 17th Session of the Commission on Human Settlements will be held from 5-14 May 1999 in Nairobi. The focus themes of the meeting are local implementation of the Habitat Agenda with particular attention to Agenda 21 and international cooperation for the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. For more information: Information and External Relations, UN Centre for Human Settlements, UNCHS (Habitat); tel: +254-2-623067; fax: +254-2-624060; Internet: <http://www.unhabitat.org/>.