



## UNEP GOVERNING COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS MONDAY, 5 FEBRUARY 2001

The 21st session of the UNEP Governing Council and Second Global Ministerial Environment Forum opened at UNEP headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya, with opening speeches, the election of officers and adoption of the agenda. Delegates then met in a Plenary session to consider the state of the environment and in a Committee of the Whole to discuss the Programme, Environment Fund, and administrative and other budgetary matters.

### OPENING PLENARY

The opening Plenary began with a musical performance by a quintet of drummers from Kenya and Tanzania, accompanied by video messages urging universal responsibility for the environment.

**OPENING STATEMENTS:** László Miklós, the outgoing Governing Council President, noted some significant achievements since the Governing Council's 20th session in 1999. He said 43 decisions had been adopted, which had led to a number of positive decisions by the UN General Assembly, and added that the Malmö Declaration had made a significant contribution to the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000, and to preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Rio+10) scheduled for 2002 in South Africa.

A message by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan was read by UNEP Deputy Executive Director Shafqat Kakakhel. In his message, Kofi Annan said the World Summit on Sustainable Development should take concrete action, and urged efforts to achieve ratification of the Kyoto Protocol by 2002. He said strong financial support is necessary to address environmental threats, and called for ongoing partnerships among governments, civil society and the private sector.

Francis Nyenze, Kenyan Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, highlighted links between environmental degradation, poverty and lack of resources and said environmental policies must meet basic needs and encourage sustainable economic growth in developing countries. He stressed disparities in energy consumption, and called for sustained international commitment to improved energy efficiency and renewable energy, as well as measures to increase public awareness.

Representatives of the UNEP Youth Advisory Council made a statement calling for implementation of policies, not more meetings and negotiations. They emphasized the link between poverty, overconsumption and environment and called on governments to: cancel debt; fulfill ODA commitments of 0.7 % of GNP; impose green taxes on international trade; develop and utilize sustainable development indicators; and create incentives, policies and measures to reduce consumption. They urged the establishment of a trust fund for youth activities.

Anna Tibaijuka, Executive Director, Habitat, noted a revitalized spirit of cooperation and synergy between UN Habitat and UNEP programmes, and highlighted areas of joint operations and

initiatives. On the issue of human settlements and environment, she stressed that equitable sustainable development could not be addressed without first achieving effective decision-making structures, secure tenure and good urban governance.

UNEP Executive Director Klaus Töpfer provided an outline of UNEP's programme areas and activities. He identified major environmental challenges, including the loss of cultural diversity, energy concerns in Africa, the debate on genetically-modified organisms, increasing global populations, rural to urban migration patterns and environmental security issues. On global energy needs, he expressed the hope that discussions on Africa's renewable energy needs would contribute to CSD-9. Citing recent evidence for increasing global temperatures, he highlighted the need for a successful conclusion to current climate negotiations. He also stressed the importance of addressing international governance issues and the value of cooperation with civil society, and emphasized the need for action to implement existing international agreements and decisions.

**ORGANIZATION OF THE MEETING:** The Plenary then elected the Bureau by acclamation: David Anderson (Canada) as President; Rosa Elena Simeón Negrín (Cuba), Janusz Radziejowski (Poland) and Tupuk Sutrisno (Indonesia) as Vice-Presidents; and Kezimbira Miyingo (Uganda) as Rapporteur. President Anderson underscored the clear link between the environment and human health and, noting the negative effects of globalization, said the challenge is to find ways to influence economic forces to work for the environment. He said the success of the World Summit on Sustainable Development depends on the mobilization of both the private sector and civil society, the use of innovative and inclusive strategies, the identification of effective and acceptable solutions and the establishment of institutions to support implementation of outputs.

The Plenary then adopted the agenda and organization of work for the meeting (UNEP/GC.21/1 and UNEP/GC.21/1Add/1), including a proposal that the Governing Council meet in Plenary and concurrently in a Committee of the Whole. Plenary also adopted President Anderson's proposal on the Chairs of the various groups: Janusz Radziejowski for the Committee of the Whole; Rosa Elena Simeón Negrín for the drafting group; and Tupuk Sutrisno to assist the President with the Plenary sessions.

### COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chair Radziejowski said participants would address the agenda item on the Programme, the Environment Fund and administrative and other budgetary matters, and indicated that the COW may need to form a working group to help it complete its work. Michael K. Koech (Kenya) was elected Rapporteur.

UNEP Deputy Executive Director Shafqat Kakakhel introduced the reports on the Environment Fund budgets - proposed biennial programme and support budget for 2002-2003 (UNEP/GC.21/6 and Add.1). He noted extensive preparatory and consultative work in preparing the draft budget. He then outlined UNEP's

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financial situation, stating that implementing the proposed Environment Fund Programme of US\$119.9 million for 2002-2003 would imply a reduction in Fund resources in real terms, but would require an increase in contributions compared to 1998-99. He urged governments to provide UNEP with adequate resources to meet its objectives, and noted the need to broaden donor support.

He presented the document on administrative and other budgetary matters (UNEP/GC.21/7), which reports on consultations on achieving stable, adequate and predictable funding, and on management of trust funds and counterpart contributions. He drew delegates' attention to a proposal that the Governing Council approve a loan of US\$8 million from the Financial Reserve of the Environment Fund to allow for immediate action on constructing additional office accommodation at the United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON).

Participants then engaged in a general discussion on the work programme and administrative and other budgetary matters. AUSTRALIA encouraged UNEP to seek private sector funding, but stressed that UNEP's work programme priorities should remain independent of private sector pressures. SWEDEN, for the EU, expressed the concern that budgetary constraints might result in parts of the programme not being implemented, and called for a wider donor base. With NORWAY, she suggested that the Governing Council request the UN to increase its regular budget to UNEP. SWITZERLAND supported the subprogrammes, while calling for greater transparency in the funding process, particularly with regard to trust funds. In response, Alexander Barabanov, UNON, underscored the multiplicity and diversity of the trust funds and said additional information would be provided if required.

KENYA and the US highlighted decreasing donor support to the Environment Fund and called for a broadened donor base to ensure greater predictability for UNEP activities. Shafqat Kakakhel said these issues had been raised at the Global Ministerial Environment Forum in Malmö. He then provided an outline of UNEP's subprogrammes.

#### **PLENARY**

Delegates heard a report on the recent NGO/Civil Society workshop. An NGO representative urged UNEP to create a trust fund to encourage the involvement and preparation of youth, NGOs, women, indigenous communities and people with disabilities in activities leading up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

Two speakers reported on the recent Global Compact workshop, stressing the importance of a global dialogue between industry, NGOs, civil society and governments. They called on industry to develop a holistic framework on, *inter alia*, environmental standards and human rights principles in their business practices. CSD-9 Chair Bedrich Moldan said that after the conclusion of its work, CSD-9 will immediately transform itself into a Preparatory Committee for the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

Executive Director Töpfer then introduced the agenda items on the state of the environment and UNEP's contributions to addressing environmental challenges, which include early warning and assessment, GEO-3, UNEP.net and UNEP-INFOTERRA. In the ensuing discussion, INDIA, for the G-77/China, called on UNEP to focus on implementing decisions taken over the last three years. He advocated a more action-oriented approach and suggested that UNEP undertake pilot projects in developing countries. He supported, *inter alia*, a balanced and integrated approach to the trade and environment issue, further discussions on environmental governance, an expanded scope for the HIPC initiative, a wider resource base for UNEP, and an evaluation of implementation of Rio commitments during the preparatory process for the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

SWEDEN, for the EU, outlined UNEP activities it considers important, including support to Africa. He urged investigating the merits of elaborating a global strategy on chemicals and a concrete initiative on mercury, and said it could consider increasing its funding to UNEP. He drew attention to its Council of Ministers'

conclusions from 18 December 2000 on strengthening environmental governance. The US commended UNEP's substantive achievements, improved administration, and increased transparency in its operations. He announced a US contribution of \$100,000 toward studying the effects of mercury. FINLAND, on behalf of the Arctic Council, highlighted the mutually beneficial partnership between UNEP and the Arctic Council, and called on UNEP to initiate a global assessment on mercury.

ROMANIA expressed interest in establishing a regional center for emergency response. NIGERIA, noting Africa's overdependence on governments for environmental financing, urged debt relief and the strengthening of national chambers of commerce, and supported capacity-building. MEXICO said the World Summit on Sustainable Development should not reopen agreements reached at UNCED.

LIBYA noted the 10-year blockade's harmful impact on social, cultural and environmental project implementation. IRAQ opposed blockades against states and called on competent environmental organizations to assist in rehabilitating Iraq's environment. SWITZERLAND supported further developing civil liability of environmental regimes to deal with damage caused by oil pollution. RUSSIA noted UNEP's role in promoting public awareness and providing assistance to governments on nature conservation and development of environmental laws.

INDONESIA highlighted UNEP's role in institution building for environmental protection in developing countries, including provision of technical and legal assistance. ICELAND called attention to recent assessments on the state of the marine environment and suggested establishing an intergovernmental panel on marine pollution, based on the IPCC model.

#### **IN THE BREEZEWAYS**

The meeting's opening day ended with many participants expressing satisfaction at the apparent support for UNEP's record during the past two years and its role as the global environmental authority. Some cautioned, however, that this session is UNEP's last opportunity to develop substantive inputs for the 2002 World Summit for Sustainable Development (formerly known as "Rio +10"). Others also expressed concern that the Summit and proliferation of multilateral environmental agreements and Secretariats may weaken UNEP's authority, while several added that this risk is aggravated by continued inadequate financial support against a backdrop of increasing demands on its work programme. Looking at the week ahead, several participants anticipated that the contentious issue of governance will be high on the agenda.

#### **THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY**

**PLENARY:** Plenary will convene from 10:00 am – 1:00 pm and from 3:00 – 6:00 pm in Room 2 to resume discussions on the state of the environment. It will then consider UNEP's contribution to future sessions of the CSD, emerging policy issues, and the outcome of the first Global Ministerial Environment Forum.

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE:** The Committee of the Whole will meet from 10:00 am – 1:00 pm and from 3:00 – 6:00 pm in Conference Room 1. It is expected to focus on UNEP's subprogrammes on environmental assessment and early warning, as well as on environmental policy development and law.

**DRAFTING GROUP:** A drafting group is expected to commence work in the afternoon. Regional groups have been requested to present two nominations each for participation in this group.

**SPECIAL EVENTS:** A special event on Energy and Cities: Sustainable Buildings and Construction, will take place from 1:00 pm in Conference Room 4. A meeting on multi-stakeholder partnerships and the signing of the UNEP-UNED Forum MoU is scheduled for 2:00 pm in the Press Room. A workshop on information for decision making will take place from 5:30 pm in the Old Cateferia. A reception hosted by the Kenyan Government begins at 6:30 pm at Kenyatta International Conference Center.