



## REPORT OF THE GLOBAL MINISTERIAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM AND SIXTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE UNEP GOVERNING COUNCIL: 29 – 31 MAY 2000

The first Global Ministerial Environment Forum – in the form of the Sixth Special Session of the Governing Council (GC) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) – took place in Malmö, Sweden, from 29-31 May 2000. Over 500 delegates from more than 130 countries – including 73 ministers, and representatives of IGOs and NGOs – attended the three-day Forum. The purpose of the Forum was to institute a process for regaining policy coherence in the field of the environment, in direct response to the need for such action emphasized in the 1998 report of the UN Secretary-General on environment and human settlements.

The Forum convened in parallel sessions of Ministerial Consultations, a Committee of the Whole (COW) and a working group on the Malmö Declaration. The ministers also considered a report by UNEP Executive Director Klaus Töpfer on UNEP's activities and the organization's contribution to the implementation of Agenda 21. The outcome of the Forum will be presented to the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly (the Millennium Assembly) in September 2000.

The Forum provided UNEP and its Governing Council with a key opportunity to influence the international environmental agenda of the 21st century. Environment ministers discussed major global environmental challenges in the new century and strategic policy responses to such issues, as well as the roles of the private sector and civil society. Consideration was also given to the need to ensure the effective and efficient functioning of UNEP governance mechanisms, and possible financial implications. Central themes of the Forum were the need to match commitments with action, the role of UNEP in international environmental politics, and concerns about how to make Rio+10 a "real" success.

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UNEP GOVERNING COUNCIL

UNEP was established as a result of the UN Conference on the Human Environment, held in Stockholm from 5-16 June 1972. Additionally, the conference created an action plan for environmental policy, an Environment Fund, and a declaration of 26 principles on the

human environment. 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. The GC consists of 58 States that serve four-year terms on the basis of the following equitable geographic distribution: 16 African, 13 Asian, 13 Western European and Others, 10 Latin American and Caribbean, and 6 Eastern European 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 state of the global environment; 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 this information to governments and NGOs, the GC's achievements include the initiation of negotiations on many major environmental conventions, including 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 Rotterdam

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Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade (PIC Convention).

**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 its role with regard to policy guidance and coordination, taking into account the development perspective. UNCED adopted Agenda 21, the action plan for implementing sustainable development, which lists 14 priority areas on which UNEP should concentrate, including 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 GC 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 established the High-Level Committee of Ministers and Officials (HLCOMO) as a subsidiary organ of the GC. The HLCOMO 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 environmental conventions and their secretariats; and help mobilize adequate and predictable financial resources for UNEP. The HLCOMO consists of 36 members, elected by the GC from members of the UN and its specialized agencies. Members 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 but may also convene elsewhere in connection with major international environmental meetings.

Delegates also adopted the Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of UNEP, which, *inter alia*, revised the UNEP Committee of Permanent Representatives' (CPR) 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 formally endorsed at the UN General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) for the review of the implementation of Agenda 21 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 the seventh session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD); freshwater; the PIC Convention; the Global Environment Facility (GEF); and land degradation. The session decided to review the status of UNEP's ongoing reform at the 20th session of the GC 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 HLCOMO.

**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 by mainstreaming the UN's commitment to sustainable development. 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, among other things, 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.

After months of informal consultations, on 28 July 1999, the UNGA adopted resolution 53/242, which, *inter alia*: requests the Secretary-General to strengthen the UN Office in Nairobi; supports the establishment of an Environmental Management Group to enhance inter-agency coordination in the field of environment and human settlements; and welcomes the proposal to establish an annual, ministerial-level, global environmental forum under the UNEP GC.

**20th GOVERNING COUNCIL:** The 20th session of the GC took place at UNEP headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya, from 1-5 February 1999, and marked the first meeting of the Council since the adoption of the Nairobi Declaration, the UNGA Special Session to review the implementation of Agenda 21, and the appointment of Dr. Klaus Töpfer as UNEP Executive Director. The meeting demonstrated restored faith in UNEP as the prominent UN agency with responsibility for the environment. The GC 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 CSD-7; and linkages among and support to environmental and environment-related conventions.

## REPORT OF THE FORUM

On Monday, 29 May 2000, UNEP GC President László Miklós (Slovak Republic) opened the first Global Ministerial Environment Forum. Following a choir performance by "Koritsia" and a film on "The Environmental Challenges of the 21st Century," opening statements were presented.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, by video, expressed hope that the Forum would rise to the challenges of the new millennium. He said despite success stories, humans continue plundering the environment and unsustainable practices are embedded in our daily lives. He outlined four areas for further effort, including the development of:



media and public education to ensure that corporations and consumers recognize environmental consequences; policies and laws that consider the ramifications of subsidies and promote environmental incentives; mainstreamed environmental objectives in policy; and sound scientific information to establish the basis for action.

President Miklós stressed that the Forum should reflect on failures while charting the way forward. He said environmental problems cannot be solved outside politics and noted the disconcerting reality that poverty persists. He suggested rethinking the rules of the global village since market forces are insufficient and more assistance from the international community is required.

Former Swedish Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson said the Forum provided an opportunity to send a strong message to the Millennium Assembly. He called for more forceful action in fulfilling obligations of environmental conventions. He emphasized: solidarity across borders; new partnerships between governments, the private sector and civil society; the importance of new information technologies; and education and awareness raising. He reiterated the concept “think globally, act locally.”

Yvonne Mainey (Kenya) and Philip Tinker (UK), representing the recently held Millennium International Children’s Conference on the Environment, challenged delegates to: enforce environmental laws; provide clean water for everyone in 10 years; make recycling more fun and increase recycling bins; substitute all plastic bags by 2004; and promote the use of clean energy. They asked delegates to listen to youth because they are future ministers and leaders.

Massumeh Ebtekar, Vice-President of Iran, delivering a message from the Iranian President, said alienating approaches to nature cannot provide solutions. She stressed religious values and harmony between humans and nature. She called for the Forum to consider a discourse substituting a spiritual approach to nature based on humility for the material and arrogant attitude prevalent today.

Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, representing 45 environment and development NGOs, said that the 1990s was the decade of environmental agreements, but not of implementing solutions. She described a paralysis of thought and action and stated that laissez-faire economic models cause social dislocation and environmental degradation. She said Rio+10 should not be a review of Agenda 21, but a global conference on sustainable development and poverty eradication. She suggested that UNEP invite civil society to comment on the creative use of its products and formalize the link with NGOs as a whole, particularly in its preparations for Rio+10.

UNEP Executive Director Klaus Töpfer noted that the Forum was established by the UN General Assembly and highlighted the meeting as the largest gathering of environment ministers in UNEP’s history. He described the two main global environmental threats as unsustainable production and consumption patterns in developed countries and poverty in developing countries. Institutions and legislation signaling commitment to tackle these threats exists, but environmental stewardship is lagging behind.

**ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS:** After opening statements, delegates adopted the agenda and elected Hossein Moeini Meybodi (Iran) as Rapporteur. Delegates agreed to continue deliberations in ministerial consultations, to establish a Committee of the Whole (COW), chaired by Leandro Arellano (Mexico), and to establish an open-ended working group on the Malmö Declaration, chaired by Swedish Environment Minister Kjell Larsson.

## MINISTERIAL CONSULTATIONS

Ministers met in three sessions over the two days. The consultations cut across a number of economic and social sectors with three themes: (1) identification of the major environmental challenges of the 21st century; (2) the role of the private sector; and, (3) the role of civil society. The discussions on these agenda items were introduced and stimulated by statements from a number of internationally recognized scientists, academics and corporate and civil society leaders, who also served as resource persons. The results of the ongoing consultations were fed into the deliberations of the working group on the Malmö Declaration and key points raised by the Ministers were reflected in the final Declaration.

**MAJOR ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES IN THE NEW CENTURY:** On Monday, 29 May, Klaus Töpfer introduced moderator Professor Konrad von Moltke, Dartmouth College. Professor Mario Molina, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, discussed the science/policy interface. He said three questions should be asked when facing an environmental issue: do we have a problem; is it a consequence of human activity; and should anything be done? Addressing the ministers as “ministers of environmental security,” M.S. Swaminathan, M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, said that we need an “ever-green revolution,” which integrates the ecological context. and that traditional knowledge is crucial.

Kuwait said legislation exists, but little action is taken when rules are not obeyed. Nigeria urged consideration of debt cancellation for African countries. Ethiopia offered the term “green evolution,” since we are returning to the roots of many farming practices, and Tanzania noted that the green revolution had success in Asia, but not in Africa. New Zealand said that the public is not always scientifically literate, raising trust issues about genetically modified organisms. Cuba recognized the role of science in development. Egypt reflected on scientific uncertainty relating to climate change and water availability.

Denmark called for a globalization of politics noting that the riches of the north have increased, but generosity has diminished. Saudi Arabia requested implementation of the Kyoto Protocol. Tunisia stressed the need for affordable technology transfers. Colombia said problem solving requires inter-ministerial cooperation. Norway emphasized decoupling economic growth and environmental degradation and interlinkages between different environmental processes.

The Netherlands called attention to both poverty and wealth-induced environmental degradation. India stated that poverty should be the central focus. The UK called for preparing a world sustainable development strategy. Malta highlighted preventive rather than reactive methods.

Sweden called for new institutions to deal with environmental crises, broader and more sustainable financing for UNEP, and new North-South agreements. Syria highlighted water and debt as major challenges. Bangladesh noted deficient resources for sustainable development. Portugal stressed the need to define priorities and to increase efficiencies at Rio+10. Germany noted that Rio+10 must start an action-oriented process now and Switzerland highlighted the importance of integrating environmental goals into all sectors. Iran said the growing gap between rich and poor indicates mismanagement on various levels. Bhutan drew attention to falling levels of development assistance.

**THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND THE ENVIRONMENT:** On Tuesday, 30 May, Klaus Töpfer introduced moderator Lin See Yan, former Deputy Governor of Bank Negara. Jürgen Dormann, Aventis, noted that, with biotechnology’s central role in the new communications and science-based economy, emerging ethical and social ques-



tions will be important aspects of sustainable development. Masashi Kaneko, Nikko Securities, described the successful introduction of green funds in Japan. He said the companies are screened according to environmental criteria and investment in them exceeded expectations, especially by young women. Gunnar Brock, TetraPak International, said globalization is both eroding state authority and necessitating harmonization of legislation across borders.

India said clean technologies could be transferred through subsidies. Indonesia called for benefit sharing between the private sector and civil society. Zambia noted that the private sector in developing countries lacks capital and called for partnerships between the private sectors in developed and developing countries. Namibia raised issues of global unity, ownership of production, and power. Japan described its focus on eco-business in the 1990s as a way to stimulate economic recovery. Morocco advocated conversion of third world debt to environmental projects. China said that UNEP should be empowered to assist the private sector in developing countries. Portugal said the private sector is often stronger than individual States, making international agreements imperative for enforcement.

The UK suggested consideration of an international environment court. Kuwait described its policy requesting the private sector to devote 5% of profits to sustainable development work. Finland advocated improving eco-efficiency and internalizing the environmental costs of production. Madagascar said poverty is the cause and effect of environmental degradation. Switzerland drew attention to the importance of small companies. Ethiopia warned of knowledge concentration in private hands. Sweden noted that the market is a good servant, but a bad master, and that companies should not dominate politics.

#### **CIVIL SOCIETY – RESPONSIBILITY AND ROLE TOWARD THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE GLOBALIZED WORLD:**

Klaus Töpfer introduced moderator Robert Lamb, Television Trust for the Environment. Charles Alexander, Time Magazine, described the merging of journalism with entertainment in the US and noted that environmental issues are not considered new and exciting by the media or the public. He said the power of advertising to raise environmental awareness has yet to be tapped and the US government must become open to civil society organizations. Yolanda Kakabadse, IUCN, illuminated the multifaceted nature of civil society. She noted that civil society is not working to control governments but rather for governance to the benefit of all. Martin Khor, Third World Network, said civil society had recently influenced two areas: raising concern about genetically modified organisms and the effects of globalization. He stressed the importance of full integration of the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities into IMF and WTO policies.

New Zealand lamented that voices of small business, indigenous people and citizens are not heard, and highlighted governments' role in reversing this trend. Poland supported extending the 1998 Århus Convention on access to information to an international scale under the auspices of the UN. Singapore reiterated building stronger partnerships with civil society in the UN. Cuba said defined policies linking civil society with government must be established. Finland noted that civil society is the creative idea generator and space must exist for this innovation to flourish. Kenya, supported by Zambia, stressed that NGOs do not always have clear mandates for environmental management and should not be supported by donors at the expense of governments. Niger emphasized that, unlike governments, NGOs are not accountable.

China said international NGOs must respect the cultural specificity of different regions. Pakistan noted that since the Seattle protests, NGOs have achieved a certain legitimacy with many governments. The Gambia said Africa is becoming a dumping ground for antiquated technologies, such as polluting cars and air conditioners, and companies do not have the luxury of integrating environmental management.

#### **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

The COW, composed of senior officials and Permanent Representatives, met in three sessions to discuss the "Report of the Executive Director on the activities of UNEP;" "Contributions of UNEP to the implementation of Agenda 21 and the programme for the further implementation of Agenda 21;" and "Provisional agenda of the Global Ministerial Environment Forum/21st session of the Governing Council of UNEP." Draft decisions on these items were forwarded for adoption to the final Plenary.

**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ON THE ACTIVITIES OF UNEP:** UNEP Deputy Executive Director Shafqat Kakakhel introduced the report of the Executive Director on the activities of UNEP (UNEP/GCSS.VI/6). He highlighted UNEP's priority areas: (a) environmental information, assessment and research; (b) enhanced coordination of environmental conventions; (c) freshwater; (d) technology transfer and industry; and (e) support to Africa. He noted the re-energized African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) and the resulting 1999 Abuja Declaration as an important landmark. He reiterated UNEP's successful monitoring of the environment through the Global Environmental Outlook report (GEO 2000).

India, and many others, congratulated UNEP on its excellent reports and affirmed that environmental issues should not be used as trade barriers. Uganda, supported by Nigeria and Zambia, encouraged the implementation of the Abuja Declaration. Portugal, on behalf of the EU, supported UNEP's role in the coordination of activities for Rio+10 and, supported by New Zealand, Canada and the US, proposed that UNEP produce a document describing the relationship between GC decisions, UNEP activities, and the UNEP budget. Saudi Arabia recognized UNEP's role in monitoring convention implementation. Canada stressed UNEP's good work on assessments. China argued for regional bureau involvement in preparing GEO 2002. The US proposed a report on convention coordination for Rio+10. Zambia encouraged UNEP to continue work on synergies of conventions at all levels. Tunisia emphasized UNEP's role in implementing UN conventions, especially for desertification and climate change. Rwanda said awareness-raising efforts need to emphasize land degradation in Africa. Malawi emphasized that increasing poverty is hampering convention implementation in Africa.

Chair Leandro Arellano (Mexico) then opened the floor for comments on an addendum to the Executive Director's report: "Water policy and strategy of UNEP" (UNEP/GCSS.VI/6/Add.1/Rev.1). India stated that it does not support multilateral processes regarding rivers. China suggested help for governments to develop appropriate water policies. Cyprus emphasized the importance of looking at the demand side of water management. Turkey expressed concern that the water report implied UNEP involvement in political issues. Portugal, on behalf of the EU, emphasized UNEP's need to work on the intersectoral approach to water management and suggested UNEP link its water strategy to the World Water Vision presented at the March 2000 World Water Forum. Argentina strongly discouraged any reference to "transboundary" waters, while Turkey encouraged use of that term. Syria preferred referring to "common" water rather than "trans-boundary."



Norway highlighted the importance of linking existing environmental conventions with references to water issues. Jordan called for funding mechanisms to assist developing countries in fulfilling their implementation obligations. Australia, supported by the US and Canada, suggested establishing a working group to look at best practices for freshwater management. Canada and China supported revitalizing UNEP's commitment to Global Environmental Monitoring Systems. UNESCO offered to help evaluate UNEP's water policy document as it evolves. Algeria reiterated links between water issues and desertification in Africa. UNEP highlighted its revitalized focus on the Regional Seas Convention.

**Decision:** The draft decision of the COW on the "Report of the Executive Director on the activities of the United Nations Environment Programme:"

- requests UNEP's Executive Director take into account comments made on further elaboration of the water policy and strategy and the necessary measures accordingly for its implementation, and report progress made to the next GC session;
- welcomes the budgetary and financial matters; and
- requests that future activity reports to the GC and the CPR present a clear correlation between relevant decisions of the GC and other legislative bodies, UNEP activities and resources set aside, actual budget expenditure, and qualitative evaluation of results achieved.

**CONTRIBUTION OF UNEP TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 21:** Shafqat Kakakhel introduced the report on "Contributions of UNEP to the implementation of Agenda 21 and the programme for the further implementation of Agenda 21" (UNEP/GCSS.VI/7). JoAnne DiSano, Director of the UN Division for Sustainable Development, highlighted UNEP's key role in Rio+10 and recalled CSD-8's invitation for coherent collaboration. Indonesia, Cuba and India stated that Rio+10 should not renegotiate Agenda 21. Uganda requested additional capacity-building funding for Rio+10 preparations. New Zealand stated that Rio+10 should be locally driven and supported by UNEP. Japan proposed holding Rio+10 in Asia.

India, Venezuela, Thailand, Nigeria, China, and Tunisia commented on failed commitments to tackling poverty, stressed financial limitations for implementing Agenda 21, and supported the transfer of sound technology. South Africa, supported by Argentina, suggested a critical evaluation of the lack of substantial achievements in tackling poverty. The US recommended looking also at past achievements and encouraged an optimistic and forward-looking approach to the proposed review for Rio+10. Canada, supported by a number of delegations, advocated UNEP's role in the Rio+10 review process. Cuba, Barbados and Venezuela stressed the need for representation of the views of non-CPR members.

**Decision:** The draft decision on "Contribution of UNEP to the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for further implementation of Agenda 21:"

- requests that the CPR review UNEP activities contributing to the implementation of Agenda 21 and the programme for the further implementation of Agenda 21;
- calls upon the Executive Director to prepare a report for consideration by the CPR to be distributed to all governments for their information and comments and to ensure the active contributions of UNEP to the preparatory process for Rio+10;
- requests that this report be submitted through the Secretary-General to the UNGA's 55th session; and
- requests that a report on this matter be submitted to the GC at its 21st session.

**THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA OF THE SECOND GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL MINISTERIAL FORUM/21ST SESSION OF THE UNEP GC:** Delegates agreed to add an agenda item for the next GC reporting on the outcome of the current Forum.

**Decision:** The draft decision on the "Provisional agenda of the Global Ministerial Environment Forum/21st session of the Governing Council of UNEP" includes an item entitled "Outcome of the first Global Ministerial Environment Forum" on the provisional agenda of the 21st GC, and requests that the GC bureau, in consultation with the CPR and the support of the Executive Director, decide on the organizational aspects and themes for the second Global Ministerial Environment Forum/21st session of the GC.

**CONCLUSION OF THE COW:** The COW concluded by adopting, with minor amendments, the draft report of its work (UNEP/GCSS.VI/L.2). It includes draft decisions for transmission to Wednesday's Plenary on: UNEP activities; UNEP's contribution to Agenda 21 implementation; and the provisional agenda of the second Global Environmental Ministerial Forum/21st session of the UNEP GC.

#### **WORKING GROUP ON THE MALMÖ DECLARATION**

The working group on the Malmö Declaration met in five sessions to discuss the preamble, environmental challenges for the 21st century, the private sector and civil society, based on the draft Declaration text (UNEP/GCSS.VI/CRP.1), presented by Chair Kjell Larsson.

On the preamble, India, supported by China, Nigeria, and Kenya, called for stronger language on poverty. India, China, Algeria and Brazil called for reference to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities in discussing international solidarity and renewed efforts. The US opposed such a reference. China underscored inequities created by the globalization process. The Netherlands, supported by the US, opposed replicating previous UN language, and supported consideration of poverty, threats, spiritual values and youth. The US and others reiterated that the Declaration should reflect the ministerial discussions. Uganda said the preamble should map out a future course of action and, with Nigeria, highlighted the debt burden. Barbados, supported by many others, requested including reference to the Barbados Declaration on Small Island Developing States (SIDS). The US, supported by Australia, opposed reference to industrialized countries when discussing unsustainable consumption and production patterns.

On overview and emerging issues, the EU supported text on putting national sustainable development strategies in place by 2002. New Zealand opposed referring to exact dates. On international environmental laws providing a basis for addressing environmental threats, Switzerland supported reference to liability; the EU to the precautionary principle; and the US and Canada to domestic laws. On assessment, Brazil, supported by Cuba, the EU and others, called for reference to unsustainable production and consumption patterns. The EU, opposed by Algeria, Canada, the US and New Zealand, called for reference to green taxes. Poland supported referring to preventive strategies.

On the private sector, Brazil requested text on enhancing governments' institutional and regulatory capacities to interact with the private sector. Regarding a new corporate ethic, the US and Switzerland emphasized that some corporate actors already abide by environmental codes. Regarding reference to the Global Compact with the private sector, India, Cuba and Brazil expressed concern with linking environment, human rights and labor standards, while Canada emphasized the voluntary nature of the Compact. Algeria, Uganda, India and others expressed concern with text on establishing environmental stan-



dards and responsible behavior for foreign investment, particularly in developing countries. The group also discussed text on civil society and Rio+10.

The agreed Declaration contains the following elements:

**Preamble:** The Declaration recalls the Stockholm and Rio Conferences, the Barbados Declaration on the Sustainable Development of SIDS, and the Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of UNEP. It notes that despite many successful and continuing efforts, the natural resource base continues to deteriorate at an alarming rate. It reaffirms the importance of speedy implementation of commitments and emphasizes urgent and renewed efforts in a spirit of international solidarity, recognizing the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. It highlights pervasive poverty, unsustainable production and consumption patterns, inequitable distribution of wealth and debt as root causes of environmental degradation. The Declaration emphasizes the importance of an aware and educated population, respect for ethical and spiritual values and cultural diversity, and protection of indigenous knowledge. It requests that the GC President bring the Declaration to the attention of the Millennium Assembly.

**Major environmental challenges of the 21st century:** The Declaration highlights:

- the urgent need for reinvigorated international cooperation and partnership and solidarity in arresting and reversing growing trends in environmental degradation;
- the alarming discrepancy between commitments and action, adopting national sustainable development strategies, and increasing support to developing countries;
- international and national laws as a basis for addressing environmental threats and the central importance of environmental compliance, enforcement and liability, and promoting a precautionary approach;
- GEO 2000 giving special attention to unsustainable consumption and production patterns among the richer segments of all countries, particularly developed countries;
- environmental threats resulting from, *inter alia*, urbanization, climate change, the freshwater crisis, drought and desertification, increasing environmental emergencies, hazardous chemicals and land-based sources of pollution; and
- the role of technological innovations and the emergence of new resource-efficient technologies in avoiding environmentally destructive practices of the past.

The Declaration also emphasizes integration of environmental considerations in mainstream decision-making, preventive action, awareness raising and education, national environmental governance and international rule of law, and harnessing the power of information technology. It states that macroeconomic policies, and practices of government and multilateral lending and credit institutions should take an environmental perspective into account. It further states that globalization trends require international institutions to adopt new approaches, and encourages a balanced and integrated approach to trade and environment policies, in accordance with CSD-8 decisions. The Declaration emphasizes the roles and responsibilities of governments, the private sector and civil society in addressing environmental challenges of the 21st century, noting that governments are the primary agents in this process.

**The private sector and the environment:** The Declaration:

- acknowledges that the private sector has emerged as a global actor with significant impacts on environmental trends through its investment and technology decisions;
- states that governments have a crucial role in creating an enabling

environment;

- calls for enhancing government institutional and regulatory capacities to interact with the private sector;
- calls on the private sector to make a greater commitment to engender a new culture of environmental accountability through the polluter-pays principle, a precautionary approach regarding investment and technology decisions, and environmental performance indicators and reporting; and
- highlights a life-cycle economy and further efforts to facilitate the transfer of environmentally sound technologies.

The Declaration also states that the potential of the new economy to contribute to sustainable development should be further pursued and should:

- focus on the areas of information technology, biology and biotechnology;
- consider the ethical and social implications;
- recognize the public interest in knowledge related to biodiversity, including the interest of indigenous and local communities; and
- promote a corporate ethic guided by public interest.

The Declaration states that the Global Compact provides an excellent vehicle for constructive engagement with the private sector and that UNEP should continue to enhance its collaboration with the private sector and consider the relationship between foreign direct investment and the environment.

**Civil society and the environment:** The Declaration:

- reiterates the increasingly critical role civil society plays in addressing environmental issues;
- highlights the need for governments, international organizations and UNEP to further engage these groups in their environmental work; and
- acknowledges that civil society provides a powerful agent for promoting shared environmental purposes and values and plays an important role in bringing emerging environmental issues to the attention of policy makers, raising public awareness, promoting innovative ideas, and promoting transparency as well as non-corrupt practices in environmental decision making.

The Declaration further states the role of civil society should be strengthened through freedom of access to environmental information, broad participation in decision making, and access to justice on environmental issues, and that governments should facilitate the ability of civil society to have a voice.

The Declaration also emphasizes:

- the need for intensified research, fuller engagement of the scientific community and increased scientific cooperation;
- the threats to cultural diversity and traditional knowledge as a result of globalization and welcomes the proclamation by the UNGA of year 2001 as the International Year of Dialogue among Civilizations;
- the need for a gender perspective in decision making; and
- the need for an independent and objective media.

**The 2002 review of UNCED:** The Declaration states that the 2002 review should: be at the summit level, not renegotiate Agenda 21, and inject a new spirit of cooperation and urgency. It also states that governments should urgently pursue the ratification of all environmental conventions, highlights the role of governments and UNEP in preparing for the 2002 review, and calls for an acceleration of preparations. The Declaration further states that the 2002 conference should address poverty and the excessive consumption and inefficient resource use that perpetuates the vicious circle of environmental degradation and increasing poverty. The Declaration states that the



conference should also review the requirements for a strengthened institutional structure for international environmental governance and that UNEP's role should be strengthened and its financial base broadened and made more predictable.

**Conclusion:** In conclusion, the Declaration highlights the unprecedented developments in production and information technologies, the emergence of a younger generation with a clear sense of optimism, solidarity and values, and women's enhanced and active role in society. It states that we can: cut poverty in half by 2015 without degrading the environment; ensure early warning through environmental security; and integrate economic policy and environmental coordination.

### CLOSING PLENARY

On Wednesday, 31 May, ministers and delegates convened for the closing Plenary. Bernard K'Omudho (Kenya) introduced the COW's draft report (UNEP/GCSS.VI/L.2). Delegates adopted without amendment the decisions on: the "Report of the Executive Director on the activities of the United Nations Environment Programme;" the "Contribution of UNEP to the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for further implementation of Agenda 21;" and the "Provisional agenda of the Global Ministerial Environment Forum/21st session of the Governing Council of UNEP."

Chair Larsson then introduced the draft Malmö Ministerial Declaration (UNEP/GCSS.VI/L.3), noting that the working group met during five sessions and completed its work at 4:00 am Wednesday morning. He stated that the group's work was linked to the ministerial dialogues to enable incorporation of their conclusions. He emphasized the Declaration's extraordinary political importance and complexity and that it is set against the background of the Millennium Assembly and Rio+10. He said the Declaration is a significant step forward in addressing critical issues confronting us and the success of our endeavors can only be judged on the merits of actions taken at the local, national, regional and global levels. Madagascar asked for inclusion of the proposal made by South Africa to host Rio+10. Chair Larsson noted that the General Assembly would further consider this issue. Plenary then adopted the Malmö Ministerial Declaration.

The Rapporteur, Hossein Moeni Maybodi, then presented the draft report of the Forum, as contained in UNEP/GCSS.VI/L.1 and UNEP/GCSS.VI/L.1/Add.1. Colombia suggested that a letter circulated from Colombian Minister of Environment on the inclusion of civil society participation in the Rio+10 process should be mentioned in the final report. The US suggested that paragraph 9 on the role of NGOs in promoting environmental agreements and public awareness should include "promoting transparency and non-corrupt practices in environmental decision making." In paragraph 11 on civil society, Pakistan stressed the need to build on capacity in civil society for such things as environmental impact assessment. Benin commented that the private sector should not allow the relocation of environmental problems such as pollution from one place to another. Angola stated that the role of women has been overlooked and stressed their involvement in policy and strategies for improving the environment in developing and developed countries. She also commented on the importance of supporting youth in policy-making. After these amendments, delegates adopted the report of the meeting.

Birgitta Dahl, Speaker of the Swedish Parliament, addressed the Plenary and reminded delegates that UNEP was the product of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, held in Stockholm in 1972. She emphasized that while it is important to have the private sector and civil society involved in attempts to achieve sustainable development, popularly elected representatives in local, regional

and national assemblies have enormous potential. While NGOs can create forceful opinions, elected representatives can find politically reasonable solutions. She warned that citizens may see internationally agreed decisions as too far removed from the person in the street. Political decisions therefore need to be made at the appropriate level to ensure that people feel related to them. She remarked that we should not expect Rio+10 to be another failure and missed opportunity to review UNCED commitments. To achieve sustainability, she urged concentration on the strategic issues of water, energy, transport and waste management to meet the needs of poor people and environmental demands.

Nigerian Environment Minister Hassan Adamu, speaking on behalf of the African environment ministers at the meeting, congratulated ministers on the completion of the Malmö Ministerial Declaration, saying it would send the right signals to the Heads of State at the Millennium Summit in September. He also reminded delegates that the African region is the poorest and most affected by environmental degradation and in need of sustainable poverty alleviation. He said African governments had signed many declarations but are unable to implement them due to lack of resources.

Brazil, on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean region, also thanked ministers and delegates for a fair, effective and satisfactory meeting. He hoped that it would result in a significant contribution towards concrete action for sustainable development.

Klaus Töpfer said the UNGA decision to give the world's environment ministers a forum for discussion such as the Global Ministerial Environment Forum had proven to be a good one. He stated that the Forum had provided a good start in the preparations for Rio+10. Swedish Environment Minister Kjell Larsson closed the meeting at 1:35 pm.

## A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE FIRST GLOBAL MINISTERIAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM

The first Global Ministerial Environment Forum provided UNEP and its Governing Council with an important opportunity to influence the international environmental agenda of the 21st century. In addition to the key outcome of the Malmö Ministerial Declaration, central themes of the Forum were the need to match commitments with action, the key role of UNEP in international environmental politics, and concerns about how to make Rio+10 a "real" success.

### LIGHTS, CAMERA ... ACTION?

Action is required to address major environmental problems. This message was clear in both the video address of the UN Secretary-General and the film on "The Environmental Challenges of the 21st Century," both presented at the opening plenary. Indeed, a central theme of the meeting was: we have discussed, deliberated and identified the problems, we have agreements and conventions, now – at the dawn of the millennium – the global community must *act*. *How* to act, however, remained hazy in the minds of many participants. The Malmö Declaration, in fact, contains harsh criticism about the "alarming discrepancy between commitments and action." Ironically, one of the most "active" discussions at the Forum was centered on the paucity of action to date.

### FROM GLOBAL COMMITMENTS TO LOCAL ACTION

The central challenge is to work out how the global ambitions contained in the increasing number of international environmental agreements can be turned into concrete local action and implementation. While countries may join in the formulation and signing of ambitious global agendas, garnering support and invoking action in a



domestic context is often a different story. It demands political commitment and resources that countries may not have or may not be willing to allocate to implementation.

In addition, national sovereignty and control over natural resources are paramount for virtually every country. This fact was exemplified by the discussion of UNEP's water policy and strategy. Water issues have received increasing attention and – in addition to the water-related activities of most UN agencies – a number of international initiatives, such as assessments, partnerships and councils, have been launched. Some delegations strongly supported UNEP linking its work with these ongoing activities. Other delegations, however, emphasized that water scarcity and management are not global problems and need to be dealt with at national, sub-regional or regional levels. The message is: international initiatives are fine, just keep out of domestic or regional natural resource distribution.

### **UNEP ON CENTER STAGE**

It was clear to many participants that a key underlying purpose of the meeting was to promote UNEP's role in international environmental affairs after a time of considerable mistrust and struggle to maintain its position within the UN family. The large number of ministers willing to make the trip to Malmö indicated a high-level political commitment to UNEP. As Klaus Töpfer noted in his opening address, the Forum marked the largest gathering of environment ministers in UNEP's history. The organization also received stellar reviews during discussions of UNEP's activities in its five priority areas. As one delegate commented, "the Forum is Töpfer's baby," and in this respect the baby took its first steps. The meeting demonstrated increased faith in UNEP and the organization is arguably better situated to act on its mandate with increased legitimacy and support.

### **THE MALMÖ DECLARATION: A NEW AND INNOVATIVE SCRIPT?**

The most tangible outcome of the meeting was the Malmö Ministerial Declaration, which many said was a "significant success." During negotiations, many were concerned with the rehashing of old arguments but delegates were generally pleased with the results, stating that a spirit of compromise prevailed, both developing and developed country perspectives were adequately incorporated. One delegate commented on the "honest and significant" nature of the Declaration. Many other delegates, however, were concerned that the Declaration, while good in intent, was "another typical UN document" and would be shelved and never reach the people. Some observers also commented on the central role that the Declaration could play in the Millennium Assembly as *the* environmental statement to the General Assembly on the challenges for the 21st century.

### **ACT 2002**

In the same vein as discussions on how to actively utilize the Malmö Declaration, it is not surprising that many participants indicated that the challenge for Rio+10 is to bridge the gap between commitments and action. This meeting is one link in the chain of events that will form the agenda for the 2002 summit. While some participants anticipated that a turf battle could be fought between UNEP and CSD over control of the Rio+10 preparatory process, no such struggle was evident within the COW or Ministerial Consultations. Essentially the Forum reiterated the sentiments expressed during CSD-8, that Agenda 21 should not be renegotiated and that the meeting should be a summit-level event hosted by a developing country. Many delegates from developing countries did stress the central role UNEP must play in Rio+10 preparations. This is a

welcome development for UNEP and provides it with political backing for its involvement, considering the vital importance this event will have in establishing a high profile for international environmental issues in the new millennium.

### **THE SCREENPLAY FOR THE 21ST CENTURY: A TIME TO ACT**

The Forum was by most accounts a success. Some participants emphasized it as a unique accomplishment, illustrated by the fact that so many environment ministers gathered together for 15 hours in an interactive debate. The ministers also, for the first time, talked about key issues beyond government responsibilities, including the private sector and civil society. Other observers, however, noted that some ministers delivered precooked statements in what was supposed to be an open dialogue, with few actually engaging with and reacting to the various expert presenters or each other. Overall, however, the Forum achieved its intention: to provide an opportunity for ministers to talk about key issues in the Rio+10 process.

While the usual North-South divide was amply illustrated in various statements, there seemed to be less polarity in the discussion on implementation of Agenda 21. Some delegates expressed fatigue with the general lack of progress on environment and development issues. They called for taking stock of what has happened since UNCED, not only to know where things stand, but also to avoid repeating mistakes in the Rio+10 process. And as developing countries were complaining of difficulties in implementing environmental commitments without adequate resources, some industrialized countries – also struggling with obstacles in domestic implementation – expressed understanding for the complexities developing countries face. All participants seemed to be grappling with the main challenge for this new century: how to turn commitments into action.

## **THINGS TO LOOK FOR**

**12TH SESSION OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODIES TO THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE: SB-12** will be held in Bonn, Germany, from 12-16 June 2000. It will be preceded by one week of informal meetings, including workshops. For more information, contact: the FCCC Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-1000; fax: +49-228-815-1999; e-mail: secretariat@unfccc.de; Internet: <http://www.unfccc.int>

**WTO COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND ENVIRONMENT:** This meeting, held from 5-6 July 2000, will include an information session with selected Secretariats of Multilateral Environmental Agreements. For more information, contact: Sabrina Shaw, Secretary of the CTE, World Trade Organization, Centre William Rappard, Rue de Lausanne 154, CH-1211 Geneva 21, Switzerland; tel: +41-22-739-5482; e-mail: [Sabrina.shaw@wto.org](mailto:Sabrina.shaw@wto.org); Internet: <http://www.wto.org/wto/enviro/te030.htm>

**FOURTH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC:** This conference will be held in Kitakyushu, Japan, from 31 August - 5 September 2000. The Conference would be held together with the Environment Congress in Asia and the Pacific (ECOASIA) organized by the Environment Agency of Japan on 3 September 2000. For more information, contact: Mr. Rezaul Karim, Chief, Environment Section, Environment and Natural Resources Development Division, UN ESCAP, United Nations Building, Rajadamnern Avenue, Bangkok 10200, Thailand; tel: +66-2-288-1614; fax: +66-2-288-1059, e-mail: [karim.unescap@un.org](mailto:karim.unescap@un.org); Internet: <http://unescap.org/mced2000/venue.htm>





## 55TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL

**ASSEMBLY – THE MILLENNIUM ASSEMBLY:** The 55th Session of the UN General Assembly – designated the "Millennium Assembly" – will open on 5 September 2000, at UN Headquarters in New York. World leaders are expected to attend the Assembly, which will provide an opportunity to articulate and affirm an animating vision for the United Nations in meeting the challenges of the 21st century. The role of the UN in promoting peace and sustainable development in the era of globalization has been identified as one of the key themes for the session. For more information, contact: Office for the Millennium Assembly, Room S-3275, United Nations, New York, NY 10017 USA; tel: +1-212-963-5739; fax +1-212-963-0616; e-mail: millennium@un.org; Department of Public Information, Room S-955, United Nations, New York, NY 10017 USA; Public queries, tel: +1-212-963-4475; Media queries, tel: +1-212-963-6870; NGO queries, tel: +1-212-963-8070; fax: +1-212-963-0536; e-mail: inquiries@un.org; Internet: <http://www.un.org/millennium>

**IUCN WORLD CONSERVATION CONGRESS:** This meeting will be held in Amman, Jordan, from 4-11 October 2000. The theme is "ecospace," a term indicating that environmental protection at various geographical scales is a prerequisite for the social, economic and political security of people. Participation in the Congress is mainly by invitation. Non-member States and organizations with formal working relationships with IUCN may attend at the invitation of the Director General, as observers. A parallel meeting called Interactive Sessions will be held on 5 October 2000, and 7 October 2000, and will be open to limited number of interested members of the public. For more information, contact: Ursula Hilt Brunner, IUCN, Gland, Switzerland; tel: +41-22-999-0232; fax: +41-22-999-0002; e-mail: urh@hq.iucn.org; Internet: <http://www.iucn.org>

**ISLANDS OF THE WORLD SIXTH CONFERENCE – SMALL ISLANDS IN THE THIRD MILLENNIUM: SHARING SOLUTIONS TO COMMON PROBLEMS:** This international conference will be held from 16-20 October 2000, on the Isle of Skye, Scotland. Conference sessions will focus on political issues, economic affairs, cultural matters, community development, biodiversity and protected areas, renewable energy, waste minimization, coastal zone and fisheries management, sustainable tourism, and health care. For more information, contact: Graeme Robertson, Secretary for the ISLANDS VI Conference; Hazelmount Heron Place, Portree, Isle of Skye, IV51 9EU, Scotland UK; tel: +44-1478-612-898; e-mail: graeme@islandstudies.org; Internet: <http://www.islandstudies.org>

**INTERNATIONAL POLLUTION PREVENTION SUMMIT:** This meeting will take place from 18-20 October 2000, in Montreal, Canada. The central themes for discussion will focus on how pollution prevention is tied to the real-life challenges of implementing sustainable development. UNEP's Sixth International High-level Seminar on Cleaner Production (CP6) will take place on 16-17 October 2000, just prior to the International Pollution Prevention Summit. For more information, contact: the Canadian Centre for Pollution Prevention, 100

Charlotte Street, Sarnia, Ontario, N7T 4R2 Canada; tel: +1-519-337-3429; fax: +1-519-337-3486; e-mail: c2p2@sarnia.com; Internet: <http://c2p2.sarnia.com/summit>

**SEVENTH PIC-INC MEETING:** The seventh session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) for an international legally binding instrument for the application of the prior informed consent (PIC) procedure for certain hazardous chemicals and pesticides in international trade will be held from 30 October – 3 November 2000, in Geneva. For more information contact: Niek Van der Graaff, FAO; tel: +39-6-5705-3441; fax: +39-6-5705-6347; e-mail: Niek.VanderGraaff@fao.org; or Jim Willis, UNEP Chemicals, Geneva, Switzerland; tel: +41-22-917 81 11; fax: +41-22-797-3460; e-mail: chemicals@unep.ch; Internet: <http://www.pic.int/>

## SIXTH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE:

COP-6 will be held in The Hague, the Netherlands, from 13-24 November 2000. For more information, contact: the UNFCCC Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-1000; fax: +49-228-815-1999; e-mail: secretariat@unfccc.de; Internet: <http://cop6.unfccc.int/>

## FIFTH SESSION OF THE INC ON PERSISTENT

**ORGANIC POLLUTANTS:** The fifth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiation Committee for an International Legally Binding Instrument for Implementing International Action on Certain Persistent Organic Pollutants (INC-5) will take place from 4-9 December 2000, in Johannesburg, South Africa. The Conference of the Plenipotentiaries will be held in Stockholm from 21-23 May 2001. For more information, contact: UNEP Chemicals (IRPTC); tel: +41-22-979-9111; fax: +41-22-797-3460; e-mail: dodgen@unep.ch; Internet: <http://irptc.unep.ch/pops/>

## FOURTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFI-

**CATION:** COP-4 is tentatively scheduled to meet from 11-22 December 2000, in Bonn, Germany. For more information, contact: the CCD Secretariat, P.O. Box 260129, D-53153 Bonn, Germany; tel: +49-228-815-2800; fax: +49-228-815-2899; e-mail: secretariat@unccd.de; Internet: <http://www.unccd.de>

## 12TH MEETING OF THE PARTIES OF THE MONTREAL

**PROTOCOL:** MOP-12 is scheduled to take place in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, from 11-15 December 2000. The 32nd Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Multilateral Fund will be held prior to this, from 4-8 December, also in Ouagadougou. For more information, contact: the Ozone Secretariat; tel: +254-2-62-1234; fax: +254-2-62-3601; e-mail: ozoneinfo@unep.org; Internet: <http://www.unep.org/ozone/meet2000.htm>

## SECOND GLOBAL MINISTERIAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM AND 21ST SESSION OF THE UNEP GOVERNING

**COUNCIL:** This meeting will be held in February 2001, in Nairobi, Kenya. For more information contact: B. Miller, UNEP, Nairobi, Kenya; tel: +254-2-62-3411; fax: +254-2-62-3748; e-mail: millerb@unep.org; Internet: <http://www.unep.org>