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POLICY STATEMENT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Introduction

1. The present session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum is taking place at a crucial juncture in the development of international policies on both the environment and sustainable development. It is also taking place in Africa, where our host country, Kenya, has just concluded a democratic election process that has received wide acclaim for its transparency and the peaceful transition of power. This event is indeed a signal that Africa is serious about good governance and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), whose headquarters is located here in Nairobi, is privileged to have witnessed this historic occasion, which we are convinced will further strengthen this unique United Nations location. In that context it is very important to also note the positive developments associated with our neighbour, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), which last year was elevated to a fully fledged United Nations programme. Together we will continue to work towards addressing the challenges of Africa and UNEP will endeavour to ensure the implementation of our theme: "environment for development."

A. The United Nations Environment Programme in its fourth decade

2. This twenty-second session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum is also being held soon after the thirtieth anniversary of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment that led to the creation of UNEP. Armed with three decades of experience and a few months after the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, we are faced with the task of capitalizing on the achievements of the international community in advancing international environmental policy over the last 30 years, putting in place a concrete response to address major environment and sustainable development challenges and responding to the imperative of implementation posed by the World Summit.

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B. Major issues before the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum

3. At the current session we have the opportunity of putting in place a strong programme based on a strategic vision aimed at underpinning the work of United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in its fourth decade. The Council/Forum at this session will debate major challenges of the decade such as:

- (a) Water;
- (b) Chemicals;
- (c) Trade and environment;
- (d) Environment and cultural diversity;
- (e) Changing unsustainable consumption and production patterns;
- (f) Natural resource base to fight against poverty; and
- (g) Regionalization.

This session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum must seek to address these issues within the framework set by the World Summit on Sustainable Development, which includes an action and target oriented Plan of Implementation,¹ a visionary but pragmatic Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development² and a new ethos of partnerships aimed at ensuring the full implementation of Agenda 21.

C. Regional focus

4. In addition, and in keeping with the regional focus of the Global Ministerial Environment Forum, we should also seize this opportunity to place emphasis on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The United Nations Declaration on NEPAD, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 57/2 of 16 September 2002, welcomed NEPAD as an African Union-led, -owned and - managed initiative, and urged the United Nations system and the international community to assist with the implementation of NEPAD. During the opening day of the Council/Forum we will focus on Africa and the special challenges that it faces. The majority of least developed countries are in Africa and UNEP must also in its activities contribute to the development of these countries, within the frameworks set by the Council/Forum and regional structures such as the Africa Union, NEPAD and subregional initiatives. It is particularly significant that Africa has taken the responsibility for its own destiny, committing to a home-grown plan for not only achieving growth but raising the standard of living of all its peoples in a transparent and dignified manner. We must be cognizant of this positive realism in our deliberations at this Governing Council.

5. As underscored in the World Summit's Plan of Implementation, the recognition of the unique situation of each region is fundamental for assessing and addressing the significant challenges that humanity faces today as common problems, i.e., poverty, unsustainable patterns of consumption and production and the degradation of the natural resource base for development. Solutions must be tailored to the needs of each region, but a strategy must be worked out to ensure that they are effective and have a real and positive impact on the environmental basis of peoples' lives in a globalizing world. During this Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, Ministers and heads of delegations will be invited to debate this crucial interlinkage between the policies and strategies in regions and those at the global level.

D. Outcome of major conferences

6. The broader international policy environment is of particular significance to our work this year. In this regard, the Ministerial Declaration of the Doha Conference of the World Trade Organization³ gave an unprecedented level of attention to trade and environment issues in the broader trade and development context. The third United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries held in Brussels, in May 2001, acknowledged the inextricable linkages between environment, development and poverty. The Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development⁴ defines a new international understanding on development financing, while the Programme of Implementation and other outcomes of the World Summit provide us with a clear and targeted road map for implementation.

E. Achievements

7. We can take some justifiable pride in the progress we have made over the last 30 years. Some of the major accomplishments include the development of a comprehensive body of international law and agreements covering major regional and global environmental issues, as well as the development of national environmental institutions, legal frameworks and implementation capacity, scientific and technological advances that have increased our understanding of complex environmental issues and enhanced our ability to address problems.

F. Challenges

8. As we noted in the third Global Environment Outlook (GEO 3) report, however, over the last 30 years we have witnessed an era in which market driven economic growth and increasing consumption have not kept pace with basic human needs of all peoples and nations. We have witnessed an unsustainable, over-utilization of natural resources that has failed to meet a multiplicity of human needs. While there have been some gains, geographically or functionally, the state of the environment has become more fragile and degraded than in 1972. At the same time, the forces of globalization continue to present a challenging new context for the implementation of environmental policy, presenting new opportunities but also posing risks of poverty and marginalization for a large segment of the world's population. A balance must be struck between human activities and nature. The security of Earth is at stake.

G. Malmö Ministerial Declaration

9. Addressing those global challenges, the Malmö Ministerial Declaration⁵ remains a relevant and inspiring policy guidance. In the Declaration, Ministers and Heads of delegation were conscious of the fact that the root causes of global environmental degradation are embedded in social and economic problems such as pervasive poverty, unsustainable production and consumption patterns, inequity in distribution of wealth and the debt burden. The Declaration identified new and emerging threats and the need to engage civil society and the private sector in addressing them in a systemic manner. It recognized the disparity between commitments and action, as well as the need for an emphasis on resource mobilization to support implementation and its foresightedness helped shape the first inputs to the preparation for the World Summit.

H. Programmatic direction

10. The proposals and the programme of work before the Council/Forum at the current session represent a determined attempt to present a forward-looking programme of action for UNEP, based on the lessons learned in the last 30 years, and take as their departure point the international consensus embodied in the various conferences that have taken place over the last two years. It is an approach that implicitly carries with it the understanding that firstly, environmental problems cannot be effectively addressed in isolation and that their social and economic context must be factored into any solution, and secondly, that we are now well equipped in terms of policy guidance and the focus of work must be on implementation.

I. INTERGOVERNMENTAL POLICY ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

A. Millennium development goals

11. In September 2000, at the United Nations Millennium Summit, world leaders declared their commitment and political will to the United Nations and its future priorities, stressing that the central challenge faced today is to ensure that globalization becomes a positive force for all the world's people. In the Millennium Declaration,⁶ they agreed to a set of time-bound and measurable goals and targets for combating poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and discrimination against women, which have become known as the millennium development goals. Under the chapter "Protecting our Common Environment", Heads of State and Government resolved in the Millennium Declaration to adopt in all environmental actions a new ethic of conservation and stewardship, and outlined a number of first steps. In that regard, one of the millennium development goals — to ensure environmental sustainability — includes the integration of the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes, the reversal of the loss of environmental resources, the reduction by half of the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water, and the achievement of significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers, by 2020. The millennium development goals were in many cases not only reaffirmed but also enhanced in the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development Plan of Implementation, with significant advances in such areas as fisheries, oceans, chemicals, benefit-sharing on biological resources, consumption and production patterns and sanitation.

12. The General Assembly, in its resolution 55/162 of 14 December 2000, on the follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit, requested the Secretary-General to prepare a "road map" on how these commitments could be fulfilled. The Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare an annual report, and a comprehensive report every five years, on progress achieved by the United Nations system and Member States towards implementing the Millennium Declaration. The annual reports would focus on cross-cutting and cross-sectoral issues, as well as on the major areas set forth in the road map, while the quinquennial comprehensive reports would examine progress achieved towards implementing all the commitments made in the Declaration.

13. The first such annual report, considered by the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session (document A/57/270), focused on commitments made in all chapters of the Declaration and paid particular attention to cross-cutting relationships among them, highlighting the two themes designated for the year: preventing armed conflict, and the treatment and prevention of major diseases, including HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. In considering that report, the Assembly, by its resolution 57/144, recognized the important contributions made by the conferences and special sessions, in particular the Fourth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO), held in Doha, the International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Monterrey, and the World Summit, held in Johannesburg. The Assembly decided to consider, at its fifty-eighth session, convening a high-level plenary meeting during its sixtieth session on the review of the implementation of the Millennium Declaration. It also decided that the review process would be considered within the framework of the integrated and coordinated follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields.

14. Notably, the themes to be addressed by the Secretary-General's report on the follow-up to the Millennium Declaration in 2003 are "Financing for development" and "Strategies for sustainable development". This has given fresh impetus to the development by the United Nations system of a coherent strategy to ensure mutual reinforcement among the new round of trade negotiations launched at Doha, to the follow-up of the International Conference on Financing for Development and to the implementation of the World Summit outcomes, as well as to the desire to optimize the overall contribution of these processes to the implementation of the millennium development goals.

B. Doha

15. An agreement on an agenda for further global trade negotiations was reached at the Fourth WTO Ministerial Conference held in Doha, Qatar from 9 to 14 November 2001. The Conference agenda was unprecedented in that for the first time the needs and interests of developing countries were placed at the heart of global trade talks, including through discussion of the need for enhanced market access for developing country products. It also included specific commitments for launching negotiations on a clarification of the relationship between existing WTO rules and specific trade obligations set out in multilateral environmental agreements. These negotiations, for the first time, cover a range of trade-related environmental issues - both stand-alone negotiating objectives, and those integrated into other negotiating objectives. The goal is to conclude the Doha "Development" round by January 2005, with a stocktaking exercise and a review of progress at the Fifth WTO Ministerial Conference, to be held in Cancun, Mexico, from 10 to 14 September 2003.

16. The Doha Ministerial Declaration preamble reaffirms the international community's conviction that the aims of upholding and safeguarding an open and non-discriminatory multilateral trading system, and acting for the protection of the environment and the promotion of sustainable development can and must be mutually supportive. Ministers also specifically welcomed the WTO's continued cooperation with UNEP and other intergovernmental environmental organizations.

17. In the section on trade and environment, Ministers agreed to: negotiate procedures for regular information exchange between secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements and the WTO; negotiate the reduction or elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers to environmental goods and services; clarify and improve WTO rules on fishery subsidies; and develop criteria for multilateral environmental agreement secretariat membership as observer in relevant WTO committees. Ministers instructed the WTO's Trade and Environment Committee to pay particular attention to: the effect of environmental measures on market access, especially for developing countries; "win-win-win" situations (when eliminating or reducing trade restrictions and distortions would benefit trade, the environment and development); intellectual property (including the continued clarification of the relationship between the Agreement on trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights (TRIPS) and the Convention on Biological Diversity); and environmental labelling requirements. In addressing these issues the Trade and Environment Committee was asked to identify any WTO rule that would need clarification. Ministers also recognized the importance of technical assistance and capacity-building programmes for developing countries in the trade and environment area, encouraging members to share expertise and experience.

18. In this regard UNEP is fully cognizant of the importance of trade for sustainable development and we have expanded our capacity-building activities, at the country level, in close cooperation with relevant agencies and multilateral environmental agreements. We have attempted to broaden collaborating networks through which national experiences can be shared, and have utilized project-based analyses to develop assessment methodologies that can assist policy makers to assess the environmental and social impacts of trade policies. This has been particularly helpful in the fisheries and agriculture sectors. A specific focus of this session of the Council/Forum is on this linkage, since it is important to understand that in today's globalized world trade policies will impact on our living environment.

C. Monterrey

19. The International Conference on Financing for Development was another seminal event in the international development process, bringing together more than 50 heads of State and Government and over 200 ministers of foreign affairs, trade and development in Monterrey, Mexico from 18 to 22 March 2002. It was the first United Nations-sponsored summit-level meeting to address key financial issues pertaining to global development, giving international organizations, donors and client countries an opportunity to review factors that affect the flow of both public and private financial resources to developing countries. It also addressed the mobilization of resources to implement the outcomes of the United Nations conferences and summits of the 1990s, including the millennium development goals.

20. Heads of State and Government adopted the Monterrey Consensus, which outlines a set of actions to be implemented in six key areas in order to fulfill internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration: mobilizing domestic financial resources for development; mobilizing international resources for development: foreign direct investment and other private flows; trade as an engine for development; increasing international financial and technical cooperation; external debt; and addressing systemic issues: enhancing the coherence and consistency of the international monetary, financial and trading systems in support of development.

21. The Conference's global deal, in which sustained political and economic reform by developing countries would be matched by direct support from the developed world in the form of aid, trade, debt relief and investment, was the first step towards ensuring that the twenty-first century is the century of "development for all". This is particularly significant at a time of a global economic slowdown, which is exacerbating the vulnerabilities of developing countries, and hindering their ability to achieve sustainable development goals. The Conference was also seen as vital in securing a financial basis for meeting global environmental challenges in the context of sustainable development, taking place as it did, a few months prior to World Summit. This positive signal was echoed not only at the Summit but also and especially at the successful third and largest ever replenishment of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), which also included two new focal areas of importance to the work of UNEP and the other implementing agencies.

II. THE WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

A. Our initial steps

22. At the sixth special session of the Governing Council constituting the first Global Ministerial Environment Forum, during which UNEP initiated its substantive preparation for the Summit in May 2000, world environment ministers expressed the following vision in the Malmö Ministerial Declaration:

"At the dawn of this new century, we have at our disposal the human and material resources to achieve sustainable development, not as an abstract concept but as a concrete reality. The unprecedented developments in production and information technologies, the emergence of a younger generation with a clear sense of optimism, solidarity and values, of women increasingly aware and with an enhanced and active role in society - all point to the emergence of a new consciousness. We can decrease poverty by half by 2015 without degrading the environment; we can ensure environmental security through early warning; we can better integrate environmental considerations in economic policy; we can better coordinate legal instruments; and we can realize a vision of a world without slums. We commit ourselves to realizing this common vision."

23. That vision has been integrated into the United Nations Millennium Declaration, and has become a guide for the international community to achieve its consensus approach designed to overcome global challenges in environment and sustainable development.

24. The Declaration stressed that the 2002 conference "should aim at addressing the major challenges to sustainable development, and in particular the pervasive effects of the burden of poverty on a large proportion of the Earth's inhabitants, counterposed against excessive and wasteful consumption and inefficient resource use which perpetuate the vicious circle of environmental degradation and increasing poverty". The Declaration represented the first strategic intergovernmental policy input to preparation for the Summit. It stimulated development in a number of areas including the strengthening of the institutional structure for international environmental governance based on an assessment of future needs for an institutional architecture that has the capacity to effectively address wide ranging environmental threats in a globalizing world. The intergovernmental debate on the strengthening of institutional arrangements to underpin sustainable development and environment began at Malmö.

25. The Summit succeeded in transforming the vision and policy direction of Malmö into a set of targets and actions fused in a concrete plan of implementation. The outcomes of the Summit therefore have a central bearing on the proposals before the Council at the current session.

B. Outcomes of the World Summit

26. The Summit had a comprehensive and multifaceted outcome, which was constituted by:

(a) The Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development, which provides the political framework through which sustainable development should be realized;

(b) The Plan of Implementation, which presents a comprehensive programme of action for the international community to implement the commitments of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit) and focuses on actions and objectives, setting targets for implementation;

(c) The partnership plenaries, which represent an innovative new approach to developing multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainable development; and

(d) The plenary discussion on the water and sanitation, energy, health, agriculture and biodiversity (WEHAB) initiative of the Secretary-General.

C. Implications for the United Nations Environment Programme

27. The 11 chapters of the Plan of Implementation include a series of commitments and targets for sustainable development building on the millennium development goals. The work of UNEP is well recognized throughout the Plan of Implementation. Its contributions were welcomed by Governments and the Plan contains a series of recommendations that either directly or indirectly impact on the work of UNEP. Following the World Summit, UNEP has systematically reviewed the implications of the Summit's outcome and reoriented the proposals before the Council, based on the Summit's recommendations. Although UNEP has a role to play in virtually all the chapters of the Plan of Implementation, the collective outcome of the Summit must be taken into account. This session, being the first major intergovernmental forum in the post Summit period, has a crucial role not only in providing the necessary guidance to our work, but also in ensuring that the environmental dimension of sustainable development remains at the forefront.

D. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation

28. A dominant theme of the deliberations that took place in Johannesburg was a recognition that Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21⁷ remained valid. There was an underlying sense that while there had been some advances in the implementation of Agenda 21, far more needed to be done in terms of implementation. The Plan of Implementation therefore provides a compelling road map with benchmarks for monitoring implementation of sustainable development. It also offers a framework for integrating the three pillars of sustainable development as well as a reference point for reviewing progress including in the implementation of the millennium development goals in the coming decade.

29. The emphasis by the Plan of Implementation on the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development as well as the focus on poverty and on development provides a further impetus to the concept of "Environment for development". Important decisions encapsulating a new impetus in a number of programme areas were taken on such issues as changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development, sustainable development in a globalizing world, health and sustainable development, sustainable development of small island developing States, sustainable development for Africa, other regional initiatives, means of implementation and the institutional framework for sustainable development.

E. Significant outcomes

30. Held in South Africa on the African continent, the Summit was in itself a powerful message from world leaders: through Africa, they envision a hopeful future, backed by responsibility and a renewed commitment of all to sustainable development. It represented a strong sign of hope for peoples and nations worldwide, supported by a reinvigorated commitment of the international community to achieve the goals of sustainable development.

31. Among the significant outcomes set out in the Plan of Implementation are:

(a) The development of a 10-year framework of programmes in support of regional and national initiatives to accelerate the shift towards sustainable production and consumption;

(b) Waste and chemicals management: countries are encouraged to implement the new, globally harmonized system for the classification and labelling of chemicals;

(c) Protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development: the reversal of current trends in natural resource degradation is a target as well as the launching of actions to achieve safe drinking water and sanitation goals. Among these will be an emphasis on municipal wastewater from 2002-2006, within the context of advanced implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities;

(d) Protection of the marine environment: it was agreed that every effort should be made to achieve substantial progress by the next Global Programme of Action conference in 2006, and that by 2004, there should be a regular process under the United Nations for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment;

(e) Air pollution: it was agreed in the Plan to improve access by developing countries to alternatives to ozone-depleting substances by 2010;

(f) Desertification: the plan calls on GEF to designate land degradation as a focal area of GEF;

(g) Biodiversity: the plan aims to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction in the current rate of biodiversity loss and calls for the negotiation of an international regime to promote and safeguard the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources;

(h) Energy: the text acknowledges that use of renewable resources should be increased and that energy supply should be diversified by the use of cleaner and more efficient and affordable technologies;

(i) Sustainable development in a globalizing world: the Plan calls for active promotion of corporate responsibility and accountability based on the Rio principles;

(j) Health and sustainable development: the paragraphs which were agreed constitute an important contribution to the attainment of the millennium development goals;

(k) Sustainable development of small island States: the text calls for national and regional implementation with adequate financial resources and promotion of technology transfer, capacity-building and support for work programmes on marine and coastal biological diversity, freshwater programmes, as well as a comprehensive review of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States;⁸

(l) Sustainable development for Africa: the Summit affirmed its commitment to sustainable development in Africa through taking concrete actions to implement Agenda 21 within the framework of NEPAD.

32. Within all of these areas and others, we have attempted in the presentation of the programme of work for the 2004-2005 biennium to put in place the preparations for UNEP's contributions towards achieving these objectives. A more comprehensive assessment of the implications of the Summit for UNEP is contained in the report UNEP/GC/22/5 on the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

F. Partnerships

33. An important aspect of the Summit that has created a new impetus is the integration of the concept of partnerships. A common understanding emerged that partnerships can be a key to realistically pursuing sustainable development - that a comprehensive and coherent international approach to the implementation of sustainable development has to include the involvement of all non-state actors and that partnerships both within the different sectors of Government as well as between governments and major groups have to play a central role. It was very encouraging to note that a large number of voluntary partnership initiatives were entered into in Johannesburg and we now face the challenging task of monitoring the implementation of these efforts to help achieve the objective of sustainable development. In this regard UNEP has long-standing experience with the private sector particularly through sectoral initiatives, industry specific voluntary initiatives and codes of conduct. We have also renewed our efforts to engage civil society at large and youth in particular in our work and new strategies in these areas have been proposed to you. We feel confident that with such experience and determination, we can facilitate this process and enhance our role as a strategic partner.

G. UNEP in partnerships

34. UNEP has been active in undertaking activities, together with governmental and non-governmental partners, to address key environmental issues through voluntary partnership initiatives (type two initiatives). UNEP, in addition to its role as a GEF implementing agency, has developed partnership with other relevant partners to work together to implement relevant actions. The areas covered by these initiatives include freshwater; coastal and marine environment; coral reefs; mountains; great apes; health and environment; environmental law; global energy network; technology transfer; clean fuels and vehicles; solar power technologies; capacity-building in trade, environment and development; and environmental emergencies.

H. Overall assessment

35. The significance of the Summit was acknowledged by the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session, when it decided in its resolution 57/253 to adopt sustainable development as a key element of the overarching framework for United Nations, in particular, for achieving internationally agreed development goals. The Assembly also encouraged the implementation of voluntary partnership initiatives and the commitments, programmes and time-bound targets adopted at the Summit. Of particular relevance is the reaffirmation by the Assembly that poverty eradication, changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production and protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development are essential requirements for the achievement of sustainable development.

I. Integrated follow-up

36. Together with the Summit, the outcomes of these conferences signal the emergence of a concrete international agenda in the context of globalization. The integrated follow-up of United Nations conferences is also under discussion at the intergovernmental level, with the establishment by the General Assembly, through its resolution 57/270 of 20 December 2002, of an open-ended ad hoc working group to cover the whole gamut of thematic issues related to the integrated follow-up to the United Nations conferences held during the last decade. Specific areas of focus, related to least developed countries and the small island developing States are also receiving attention at the highest intergovernmental level and the challenges facing these vulnerable countries will deserve special attention. In this context, and throughout system wide efforts, UNEP is ready to fulfil its role as the leading authority on the global environment.

III. THE 2004-2005 PROGRAMME OF WORK

A. Integrated approach

37. The summit highlighted the critical interlinkages between the three pillars of sustainable development - environmental protection, social equity and economic development. However, we must also acknowledge the crucial environment and development link, as evident in the relationship between poverty and environmental degradation, as well as the ever growing demands being placed on our environment by unsustainable patterns of production and consumption on the other. This perspective, together with the decisions of foregoing landmark summits that identified emerging priorities, define the context in which the proposed programme of work for 2004-2005 has been prepared, while ensuring consistency with the mandate of UNEP, and being true to the WSSD focus on implementation.

B. Five priority areas

38. Although there have been a multitude of important outcomes from recent major conferences, the five areas of concentration adopted by the Governing Council five years ago (1998) continue to underline the programme of work. These are:

- (a) Environmental information assessment and early warning;
- (b) Enhanced coordination of environmental conventions and development of environmental policy instruments;
- (c) Freshwater;
- (d) Technology transfer and industry; and
- (e) Support to Africa.

C. Three programme categories

39. In the 2004-2005 programme of work, we have further strengthened coherence and integrated approach by linking our programme priorities with three main categories of activity. These are:

- (a) Environmental monitoring, assessment and early warning;
- (b) WEHAB; and
- (c) Promoting policy integration.

(a) Environmental monitoring, assessment and early warning

40. This category is consistent with the World Summit's Plan of Implementation, which states that credible information about environmental conditions and trends is an important precondition for strategic policy interventions. In this regard, we must ensure that environmental policy making rests on a firm scientific foundation. The above activities will be carried out with the range of our partners, other international institutions and the scientific community, and build on a networking approach including the UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) as well as UNEP's collaborating centers such as GRID Arendal. We are fortunate to have been able to significantly improve our capacity through the research and analysis activities that our collaborating centres provide.

41. A major emphasis will be placed on rendering operational the intergovernmental panel on global environmental change, as decided at the seventh special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum in decision SS.VII/1 on international environmental governance. We will also continue to develop priority global environmental assessments through activities such as the GEO series, the

Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, the Global International Waters Assessment and continued support to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The UNEP collaborating centres, such as GRID Arendal, as well as UNEP-WCMC will be valuable in these endeavors. We will also continue to support research and application programmes such as the World Climate Programme. We will continue to work with and support the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and other United Nations agencies in the development and implementation of global observing and monitoring systems. In addition, we will continue to support the development of capacity at the regional, subregional and national levels for the production of integrated environmental assessments to provide early warning and vulnerability assessments of emerging environmental issues and, in cooperation with other United Nations agencies and stakeholders, prepare and implement guidelines and strategies on early warning preparedness, adaptation and mitigation for natural and man-made disasters with an emphasis on environmental issues associated with these events. We will also assist countries in anticipating, preparing for and responding to environmental emergencies, including by conducting post-disaster and post-conflict environmental assessments.

(b) WEHAB

42. UNEP played a key role in developing the Secretary-General's WEHAB initiative for the World Summit on Sustainable Development. In the coming biennium, UNEP will focus many of its activities on ensuring that a strong environmental component is integrated into the five WEHAB issues of water and sanitation, energy, health, agriculture and biological diversity. In doing so, UNEP will emphasize the interrelationships between environmental protection and poverty alleviation, including by developing and implementing guidelines on integrating environmental considerations into poverty alleviation strategies. Our work in this area will be carried out in close cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank and other United Nations agencies involved in WEHAB implementation. The impacts of climate change cut across the various WEHAB issue areas and will be addressed in an integrated fashion at the same time as efforts are made to address unsustainable patterns of production and consumption that intersect with the WEHAB agenda. We should also promote the involvement of non-state actors in pursuit of these goals, through partnership initiatives and strategic alliances. In the area of health much has been achieved by harnessing the resources, and ensuring the involvement of, the private sector.

(c) Promoting policy integration

43. This category finds emphasis in the approach taken by the Summit of bringing together the social, economic and environmental pillars of sustainable development. Successful implementation of sustainable development, environmental policy and the WEHAB agenda will require adopting an integrated approach to policy making that addresses cross-cutting issues. UNEP has already developed a strong track record in many of these areas and the outcome of the Summit provided an added impetus for strengthening UNEP activities in the next biennium. Major initiatives under this area of activity will include: changing consumption and production patterns; minimizing the risks of climate change; forging synergies between trade, finance, environment and development policies; strengthening environmental governance and law; fostering regional cooperation; and engaging civil society, the private sector and the public. A detailed presentation of this approach is contained in the 2004-2005 strategic programme overview which is before the Council at this session.

D. International environmental governance

44. An additional theme in the programme of work before the Council/Forum is that of the implementation of the outcome of the UNEP international environmental governance process. The recommendations of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Group of Ministers or Their Representatives on International Environmental Governance,⁹ as adopted by the World Summit on Sustainable Development, included a number of areas of significance for the implementation of environmental policy in the future, and implementation measures are included in the programme of work. With regard to the role of the Council/Forum, the strengthened environmental monitoring and assessment activities of UNEP will assist in the central responsibility of keeping under review the world environment situation and developing, based on

sound science, indicators and policy responses to emerging environmental problems of wide international significance. The current session of the Council/Forum has also been structured to take into account the recommendations of the Intergovernmental Group of Ministers with respect to the structuring of the Council/Forum.

E. Linkage with multilateral environmental agreements

45. Special efforts will be made to enhance synergies and linkages among the various multilateral environmental agreements and a greater emphasis will be given to putting in place a coherent programme of capacity-building geared to the implementation of these conventions at the regional, subregional and national levels.

F. Bridging science and policy

46. The role of scientific assessments in strengthening policy and decision-making was a major theme of the international environmental governance process. The decision taken at the seventh special session of the Governing Council on an intergovernmental panel on global environmental change was echoed by the Summit's call for more effective channels for scientific and technological advice. The Council/Forum has before it a comprehensive proposal for the establishment of the panel. A fully operational panel will enable us to mobilize the scientific and technical expertise around the world to strengthen the knowledge base of UNEP, provide the Council/Forum with timely and considered advice, strengthen the Council's/ Forum's authority and subsequently its ability to implement its mandate, and promote concerted action among the different entities of the existing international environmental governance structure.

G. Capacity-building and technology support

47. Capacity-building will become a priority integrated within each of the activity areas in line with the emphasis given to it by the international environmental governance process. In this regard, we are in the process of discussing with UNDP the development of a strategic partnership for capacity-building, building on the analytical, technical and normative capacity of UNEP and the field based capacity of UNDP. We will fully utilize our available resources. The UNEP International Environmental Technology Centre in Osaka, Japan will further strengthen its activities to provide technology support for capacity-building to ensure that we fulfil the expectations that Governments have expressed. In this context we must improve the transfer of technology in order to fight poverty in an environmentally conscious and socially responsible manner. The development of an intergovernmental strategic plan for technology support and capacity-building to developing countries, as agreed in Cartagena, will form an important step towards providing an overall strategic direction.

H. The Environmental Management Group

48. We are also in the process of strengthening the secretariat of the Environmental Management Group with a view to realizing the potential of the Environmental Management Group as an instrument for policy coordination across the United Nations system on environmental matters.

I. Universal membership of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum

49. One issue addressed in the context of the international environmental governance which was referred to the Summit was the complex but important issue of the establishment of universal membership for the Governing Council of UNEP. This matter was considered by the General Assembly at its recent session and addressed in its resolution 57/251, adopted on 20 December 2002. The Assembly invited Member States, the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum and relevant bodies of the United Nations system to submit their comments on this question to the Secretariat and requested the Secretary-General to submit a report incorporating those views to the Assembly for its consideration at its fifty-eighth session. In preparation for this session of the General Assembly, the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum should, in 2004, make concrete proposals on this matter. The General Assembly, in the

same resolutions, requested UNEP, within its mandate, to continue to contribute to sustainable development programmes and the implementation of Agenda 21 at all levels. We believe that the programme of work before the Council/Forum at this session provides a comprehensive response to the desire of the international community for UNEP to play a central role in this regard.

IV. FINANCING

50. Over the past five years the UNEP secretariat has been highly gratified and encouraged by the increasing expression of confidence by member States in the work of this organization. This sense of increasing confidence has been heightened in the recent past by a series of announcements by some major donor Governments, which have substantially increased their contribution to the Environment Fund, for which UNEP is extremely grateful.

51. Recently, UNEP concluded bilateral partnership agreements with several Governments on cooperation in core areas of our programme resulting in additional financial allocations. Rather than being tied to specific projects favoured by donors, the funds provided under these agreements are programme centred and will serve to ensure greater stability and predictability of funding for our work programme.

52. Partnerships involving the private sector and major groups are yet another potentially significant source of funding. UNEP is committed to cooperation with the private sector and major groups, and partnerships will be forged in these areas. Following the Summit it is increasingly evident that the pursuit of sustainable development is only realistically possible through the involvement and active participation of all stakeholders.

53. Another aspect of this increased sense of confidence is expressed through an increase in intergovernmental mandates for the organization. Despite these developments however, the level of resources available to the Environment Fund continues to be severely constrained and there is an evident mismatch between expectations and financing. The 2004-2005 programme of work before the Council/Forum is based on a proposed budgetary envelope of US\$ 130 million which includes a modest increase over funding in the last biennium. This proposal is based on a realistic assessment of the level of resources that may be acceptable to member States at this stage, but constitutes just a bare minimum of financial requirements to meet the ambitious proposals contained in the programme of work. The call of the Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme¹⁰ for “stable adequate and predictable” financial resources therefore remains as relevant today as it was the day that the Declaration was adopted.

54. Although future levels of funding by member States will be dependent on their continued confidence in the work of the organization, the overall financing profile has been encouraging. The initiation of a voluntary indicative scale of contributions has already begun to influence the make up of contributions to the Environment Fund. Following the notification to member States of the scale, a number of States have indicated their acceptance and it is a matter of great satisfaction that for the first time in the history of UNEP, more than 100 member States may soon become contributors to the Environment Fund. While this enhances the predictability of Fund resources, an even more important aspect is the increased ownership and support of UNEP reflected by this increase. As envisaged at the seventh special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, the indicative scale of contributions will be presented to the Council/Forum in 2004, for further consideration.

55. The General Assembly of the United Nations in its resolution 57/251 of 20 December 2002 reiterated the need for stable adequate and predictable financial resources and, in accordance with its resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972 underlined the need to consider adequate reflection of all administrative and management costs of UNEP in the context of the United Nations regular budget. The Assembly in the same resolution requested the Secretary-General to keep the resource needs of UNEP and the United Nations Office at Nairobi under review so as to permit the delivery in an effective manner, of necessary services to UNEP and other United Nations organs and organizations in Nairobi. In this regard it is important to note

that administrative costs have remained stable during the past biennium and the 2004-2005 budget envelope maintains this trend. Although we have been successful in attempts to be prudent and conservative with regard to administrative expenditure, it has been possible to obtain the necessary funding to improve the Nairobi United Nations location, not only for the benefit of staff, but also member States represented at UNEP and UN-HABITAT.

56. The Assembly in previous resolutions (55/200 of 20 December 2000 and 56/193 of 21 December 2001) also recognized the need for enhanced United Nations regular budget support. However, the overall level of United Nations regular budget contribution remains in the region of 5 per cent of the Environment Fund. Member States may wish to address this matter further in the Council/Forum, but more importantly, in the context of the appropriate committees of the General Assembly.

V. CONCLUSION

57. The last two years have been unprecedented for UNEP in terms of the complex and intricate intergovernmental processes that we have been involved in. It is gratifying that member States have illustrated not only their political will, but also their support towards strengthening UNEP as the vital environmental voice in the United Nations system. The World Summit process and its outcome demonstrated a commitment to bridge differences and agree on a plan of implementation to ensure the future sustainability of the planet. The Summit also provided an illustration of how voluntary partnerships could be created in pursuit of the improvement of the lives of millions of people.

58. These processes have at times been difficult, but in the end, infinitely rewarding. It is a demonstration that despite the uncertainties and threats to security that the world of today faces, the international community can come together with a common purpose of ensuring the protection of the global environment and sustainability of our Earth, which guarantees the security of future generations.

59. The programme of work presented to the Council/Forum attempts to rise to the challenge of implementation posed by the Summit. It represents the contribution of UNEP toward the international consensus for action on sustainable development, and a new ethos of determination and implementation.

60. The vision of world environment ministers expressed in Malmö will further guide us to intensify our effort to close the gaps between commitment and action. UNEP will vigorously implement focused actions, with the support of Governments and all other partners, to make the environment work for the eradication of poverty and the improvement of human life in harmony with nature. We are committed to enhancing the understanding that sustainable development and environmental security are essential pillars for peace. Through our strengthened efforts to take actions designed to establish a sustainable relationship between humans and nature, we must fortify the foundation of peace today and tomorrow, and ensure that all our endeavours benefit present and future generations who enjoy the sound environmental support offered by the planet.

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- ¹ Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August – 4 September 2002 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1) chap. I, resolution 2, annex.
 - ² Ibid. resolution 1, annex.
 - ³ WT/MIN (01)/DEC/1.
 - ⁴ Report of the International Conference on Financing for Development, Monterrey, Mexico, 18-22 March 2002 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.II.A.7), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.
 - ⁵ Governing Council decision SS.VI/1, annex.
 - ⁶ A/57/270 and Corr.1.
 - ⁷ General Assembly resolution S-19/2, annex.
 - ⁸ Report of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Bridgetown, Barbados, 25 April-6 May 1994 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.I.18 and corrigenda), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.
 - ⁹ UNEP/GCSS.VII/L.4/Add.1.
 - ¹⁰ Governing Council decision 19/1, annex.
