



General Assembly
Economic and Social Council

Distr.
GENERAL

A/44/278 ✓
E/1989/92
16 May 1989
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: RUSSIAN

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Forty-fourth session
Items 12 and 83 (f) of the
preliminary list*
REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC
CO-OPERATION: ENVIRONMENT

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
Second regular session of 1989
DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL
ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION:
ENVIRONMENT

Letter dated 15 May 1989 from the Permanent Representative of
the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the United Nations
addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit a letter from E. A. Shevardnadze, member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the USSR, containing the Soviet Union's reply to the request by the General Assembly (in resolution 43/196) for the views of Governments on the convening of a United Nations conference on environment and development no later than 1992.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under items 12 and 83 (f) of the preliminary list, and of the second regular session of the Economic and Social Council in 1989.

(Signed) A. BELONOGOV

* A/44/30/Rev.1.

ANNEX

Letter dated 13 May 1989 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics addressed to the
Secretary-General

In reply to the request made by the General Assembly at its forty-third session, in resolution 43/196, for the views of Governments on the convening of a United Nations conference on environment and development no later than 1992, I transmit to you the following comments.

The Soviet Union supported the resolution of the General Assembly. It is convinced that such a conference is destined to be an extremely important event in environmental protection activities: it will to a large extent determine the strategy for the ecological survival of our planet. The USSR therefore proposed that the conference should be held at the highest political level, in keeping with the scale of the task before it.

The conference should assess the situation with regard to the major ecological problems, sum up the experience of States in solving those problems and lay down the basic guidelines for environmental protection policy for all countries and international organizations. The participants in the conference could solemnly endorse standards and principles - a special code of conduct for States in the field of environmental protection. It would seem that if the decisions of the conference were given a mandatory legal status, in the form, perhaps, of a global framework convention, it would be possible to ensure strict compliance by all States with the rules of an environmentally sound world community.

The conference should devote particularly careful attention to the organizational aspect of international co-operation on environmental protection, which is crucial if we are to be able effectively to carry out the task of safeguarding mankind's environmental security. The vital link in the international machinery for environmental protection - the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) - needs to be substantially strengthened by enhancing its co-ordinating role, broadening its material basis and according due weight to its decisions and recommendations.

The possibilities offered by such principal organs of the United Nations as the Security Council and the International Court of Justice should be made the subject of a comprehensive study and be put to use for the purposes of environmental protection. By way of example, a special committee on environmental questions could be set up under the the auspices of the Security Council.

Due consideration should be given at the conference to the issues of the propagation and widespread use of advanced technologies for conservation of the environment and natural resources: on the extent to which each country is assured the technical means of maintaining the soundness and stability of the environment depends, in the final analysis, the overall situation on Earth.

It would also be advisable if discussions at the conference were to emphasize the fact that openness in exchanging environmental information is not simply a prerequisite for the internationalization of efforts to protect the environment but also a powerful confidence-building factor. For its part, the Soviet Union advocates the adoption here of far-reaching measures, such as regular and strict accountability for States in respect of national environmental protection activities and of all environmental incidents occurring in their territories.

Particular attention should be devoted to questions of monitoring, evaluation and the forecasting of threats to the environment. In this connection, I should like to recall the proposals submitted by the Soviet Union to the General Assembly at its forty-third session concerning the monitoring from space of the state of the Earth's environment and the establishment within the United Nations of a Centre for Emergency Environmental Assistance. It could now be time to put these ideas into practice.

Recommendations by the conference to convert some military production facilities to environmental protection operations would have a beneficial effect on the world environmental situation. It is high time to settle the question of establishing an international environmental fund to be based, in the first instance, on resources saved as a result of arms-limitation and disarmament measures.

In the present circumstances, the task of forming a new environmental awareness assumes paramount importance: in this, the education of the younger generation has to play a vital role. The decisions of the conference could include proposals concerning an appropriate restructuring of public education.

Informed public opinion can exercise a positive influence by ensuring that environmental decisions conform to society's needs. The conference should promote effective interaction between international organizations and public movements in support of an environmentally sound planet.

Careful preparatory work and co-ordination of the planned international debates and meetings are required if the 1992 conference is to be successful. Direct responsibility for presiding over this work could be vested in the Governing Council of UNEP, or a special open-ended preparatory committee could be set up.

With regard to the title of the conference, it should reflect the essential nature of the problems which are to be discussed at it. In this case it would be appropriate to refer to the safeguarding of international environmental security, i.e. the protection and qualitative improvement of the environment in conjunction with steady development.

It would be advisable for the conference to be held in the middle of 1992. The question of the venue could be decided in the course of consultations among interested States.

A/44/278
E/1989/92
English
Page 4

The Soviet Union believes that the 1992 conference will fulfil its purpose if full account is taken of the interests of all countries and of all mankind, because, if mankind is to gain new strength and enjoy a secure existence in the future, a major prerequisite is that it should develop in harmonious interaction with its environment. We are convinced that an environmentally sound world is attainable.

E. SHEVARDNADZE
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the USSR
