

QUESTIONS RELATING TO SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1536 (XLIX). United Nations Conference on the Human Environment

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling General Assembly resolutions 2398 (XXIII) of 3 December 1968 and 2581 (XXIV) of 15 December 1969,

Noting that the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, established by General Assembly resolution 2581 (XXIV) has initiated its work with a constructive and productive first session in March 1970,⁴⁴

Further noting that the Preparatory Committee at that session, on the basis of a sectoral review of environmental problems which serves to define the total scope and subject matter of the Conference, recommended possible types of action to be taken in the context of the Conference at the national, regional and international level,

Noting with appreciation the steps that have been taken by a number of specialized agencies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to assist in the preparatory work,

Stressing the need for vigorous pursuance of the preparations for the Conference,

1. Takes note of the progress report of the Secretary-General regarding the present stage of the preparations for the Conference;⁴⁵

2. Reaffirms the action-oriented character of the Conference;

3. Looks forward with interest to the proposals of the Secretary-General concerning priorities in drawing up the agenda for the Conference;

4. Agrees with the Preparatory Committee that areas for immediate action should be identified prior to the 1972 Conference and that to this end work should be started by the Preparatory Committee at its second session, taking into account the various economic, social and other aspects involved;

5. Believes it essential that, when drawing up the agenda for the Conference, due account be taken of such environmental problems as are particularly acute in developing countries and relevant to their needs;

6. Reiterates that for the Conference to achieve its objectives, it is essential that its agenda be selective, its organizational structure simple and efficient and its documentation reasonably limited;

7. Earnestly hopes that the preparations for the Conference and the Conference itself will promote, in particular, the aims of the Second United Nations Development Decade by contributing to sound economic and social development;

8. Stresses the value of national reports and case studies for Governments both as a means of collecting important information for the Conference and of helping the Governments to evaluate and take steps to improve the situation in their respective countries;

9. Recommends that Governments make every effort to prepare national reports and submit proposals for case studies within the time limits set by the Secretary-General;

10. Recommends that the Conference be presented with a draft declaration on the human environment, which should be a document of basic principles in regard to the human environment, and that careful preparation of the declaration should be initiated on the basis of the suggestions in the report of the Preparatory Committee on its first session;⁴⁶

11. Underlines that, in conformity with Council resolution 1448 (XLVII) of 6 August 1969, every effort be made to keep the financial implications to the minimum compatible with the task of fulfilling the objectives of the Conference;

12. Recommends that the second session of the Preparatory Committee take place early in 1971 at Geneva, in view of the need to ensure the closest possible co-operation with the specialized agencies in drawing up the agenda for the Conference;

13. Invites the Secretary-General to make his report available to the members of the Preparatory Committee not later than six weeks before the opening of the second session of that Committee;

14. Recommends that the Secretary-General arrange for an informal meeting with the members of the Preparatory Committee in New York before the end of 1970 for an exchange of views concerning his plans, in particular for the agenda of the Conference;

15. Recommends that the following session or sessions of the Preparatory Committee be held later in 1971 at a place or places to be determined by the General Assembly at its twenty-fifth session;

16. Recommends further that the Secretary-General investigate immediately the possibility of providing assistance to developing countries for the preparation of national reports and case studies;

17. Requests the regional economic commissions to report at their earliest convenience within the framework of the preparations for the Conference on their current and planned activities in the environmental field, and to co-operate closely in these preparations;

18. Calls upon the Governments, specialized agencies and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations concerned to give all possible support to the Secretary-General and the Preparatory Committee in their efforts to prepare effectively for the Conference.

1719th plenary meeting,
27 July 1970.

⁴⁴ A/CONF.48/PC/6.

⁴⁵ E/4828.

⁴⁶ See A/CONF.48/PC/6, para. 27, II.