



**Governing Council
of the United Nations
Environment Programme**



Distr.
GENERAL

UNEP/GC.21/INF/12
29 December 2000

ENGLISH ONLY

Twenty-first session
Nairobi, 5-9 February 2001
Item 6 of the provisional agenda*

GLOBAL MINISTERIAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM

FOLLOW-UP OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS

ISSUES ARISING FROM THE RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
AT ITS FIFTY-FOURTH AND FIFTY-FIFTH SESSIONS SPECIFICALLY CALLING FOR
ACTION BY THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

Note by the secretariat

Summary

The present report, a standing reporting requirement to the Governing Council as a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, provides information on issues arising from the resolutions of the fifty-fourth and fifty-fifth regular sessions of the General Assembly, which specifically call for action by, or are of direct relevance to, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). In areas where follow-up action to each resolution has not been indicated, this is provided in the reports of the Executive Director under the relevant agenda items.

The outcome of the fifty-fourth and fifty-fifth sessions of the General Assembly reflects a discernible increase in the number of resolutions that deal with environmental issues and that specifically refer to, acknowledge, or have a direct bearing on the work of UNEP, thus indicating the increasing importance accorded to environmental issues in the work of the General Assembly.

* UNEP/GC.21/1.

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I. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS FIFTY-FIFTH SESSION – THE MILLENNIUM ASSEMBLY

1. On 8 September 2000, the General Assembly adopted the United Nations Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2), by which over 150 heads of State and government 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, the Declaration outlines a series of fundamental values considered essential to international relations in the twenty-first century. One of these values is "respect for nature". In this regard, the Declaration states that prudence must be shown in the management of all living species and natural resources, in accordance with the precepts of sustainable development, as "only in this way can the immeasurable riches provided to us by nature be preserved and passed on to our descendants". The Declaration further states that current unsustainable patterns of production and consumption must be changed "in the interest of our future welfare and that of our descendants".

2. In order to translate these shared values into actions, the Declaration identifies key objectives, one of which is "Protecting our common environment". It states that "We must spare no effort to free all of humanity, and above all our children and grandchildren, from the threat of living on a planet irredeemably spoilt by human activities, and whose resources would no longer be sufficient for their needs". Reaffirming support for the principles of sustainable development, including those set out in Agenda 21, as agreed upon at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the heads of State and Government resolved to adopt in all environmental actions a new ethic of conservation and stewardship. The first steps in this endeavour are: to make every effort to ensure the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol, preferably by the tenth anniversary of the Rio Conference in 2002, and to embark on the required reduction in emissions of greenhouse gases; to intensify collective efforts for the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests; to press for the full implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa; to stop the unsustainable exploitation of water resources by developing water management strategies at the regional, national and local levels which promote both equitable access and adequate supplies; to intensify cooperation to reduce the number and effects of natural and man-made disasters; and to ensure free access to information on the human genome sequence.

3. Another key objective identified in the Declaration is "meeting the special needs of Africa". In this regard, the Declaration underscores the need to take special measures to address the challenges of poverty eradication and sustainable development in Africa, including debt cancellation, improved market access, enhanced official development assistance and increased flows of foreign direct investment, as well as transfers of technology.

4. The Declaration also devotes a section to the objective of "strengthening the United Nations" in order to make it a more effective instrument for pursuing priorities, including "the fight for development for all the peoples of the world, the fight against poverty, ignorance and disease; the fight against injustice; the fight against violence, terror and crime; and the fight against the degradation and destruction of our common home". Furthermore, the heads of State and government resolved to encourage regular consultations and coordination among the principal organs of the United Nations in pursuit of their functions; to ensure that the Organization is provided on a timely and predictable basis with the resources it needs to carry out its mandates; and to give greater opportunities to the private sector, non-governmental organizations and civil society, in general, to contribute to the realization of the Organization's goals and programmes.

5. Subsequently, the Assembly, in recognition of the need to create a framework for the implementation of the Declaration, adopted resolution 55/162 on "Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit", which called for an integrated, coordinated, comprehensive and balanced approach in the implementation of the Declaration, and for the entire United Nations system to assist Member States in every way possible to that end. The Assembly decided to use existing structures and mechanisms, upcoming events, special sessions of the Assembly, as well as related conferences and events, to the maximum extent possible in the

implementation of the Declaration. It called on the whole United Nations system to be involved in the follow-up to the Summit, and invited specialized agencies and related organizations to strengthen and adjust activities, programmes and medium-term strategies, as appropriate. It also requested the United Nations to take action to meet the special needs of Africa and to strengthen the broad range of its engagement in Africa, so as to intensify support for such objectives as poverty eradication and sustainable development.

6. The Assembly requested the Secretary-General to ensure system-wide coordination to assist with the follow-up and invited him to identify, within the framework of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, innovative ways of enhancing cooperation and coherence throughout the United Nations system. In this context, it requested him to prepare a long-term “road map” towards the implementation of the Declaration. It also requested him to prepare a periodic report every five years and annual reports to review progress towards implementing the Declaration, reflecting the broad array of specific goals and commitments, while allowing each annual report to look in greater depth at one or two areas covered in the Declaration, with a focus on results and benchmarks achieved, major gaps and strategies for reducing them, cross-sectoral issues and cross-cutting themes. The Assembly stressed that the reports should draw on the work of the entire United Nations system.

A. Resolutions of major significance to UNEP

7. In its resolution 55/200 of 20 December on the “Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its sixth special session”, the Assembly continued the trend established at the fifty-third session to adopt substantive resolutions related to the report of the UNEP Governing Council. Recalling its resolution 53/242 entitled “Report of the Secretary-General on environment and human settlements,” as well as the Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of UNEP, the Assembly underscored that the 10-year review of progress achieved in the implementation of the outcome of the Rio Conference would provide the international community with a unique opportunity to take action for the implementation of its commitments and for the strengthening of the international cooperation urgently required to address the challenges of sustainable development in the twenty-first century. It also reaffirmed the role of UNEP in preparing the 10-year review.

8. The Assembly took note with appreciation of the report of UNEP’s Governing Council on its sixth special session and the decisions contained therein, as well as the consultations among member States in preparation for the twenty-first session; in this regard, it took note of the ongoing consultations contributing to the further elaboration and implementation of UNEP’s water policy and strategy. The Assembly welcomed the convening of the first Global Ministerial Environment Forum, expressing its deep appreciation to the Government of Sweden, and it took note with appreciation of the Malmö Ministerial Declaration as one of the contributions to the Millennium Summit and to the preparations for the 10-year review of the achievements of the Rio Conference. The Assembly further stressed the importance of the Millennium Declaration’s section on “protecting our common environment”.

9. The Assembly welcomed the decision of the Governing Council on the contribution of UNEP to the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, and stressed that UNEP, as the principal body in the field of environment within the United Nations system, should continue to play an important role in the implementation of Agenda 21 and in the preparation of the 10-year review of the achievements of the Rio Conference.

10. The Assembly further underscored the need for sufficient financial resources, on a stable and predictable basis, to ensure the full implementation of UNEP’s mandate, in particular with a view to ensuring its strong involvement in the preparatory process for the 10-year review at its various levels, and in the implementation of the outcome of the review. It further requested the Secretary-General to provide the necessary resources from the United Nations regular budget to UNEP for the biennium 2002-2003, and to consider other ways to support the strengthening of the Programme in view of the upcoming 10-year review.

11. By its resolution 55/198 on “Enhancing complementarities among international instruments relating to environment and sustainable development”, the Assembly took note of the report of the Secretary-General, which was prepared by UNEP and contained input from the secretariats of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention to Combat Desertification and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. It welcomed the work undertaken by the three secretariats and other relevant organizations in the implementation of Assembly resolution 54/217 on the same subject.

12. The Assembly encouraged the conferences of the parties and the secretariats of the Climate Change Convention, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention to Combat Desertification and other international instruments relating to environment and sustainable development, as well as relevant organizations, especially UNEP, including, as appropriate, the involvement of the Environmental Management Group, to continue their work in enhancing the complementarities among them, to strengthen cooperation with a view to facilitating progress in the implementation of the Conventions at the international, regional and national levels and to report thereon to the respective conferences of the parties. The Assembly further encouraged those conferences of the parties to coordinate the timing of their sessions and promote the streamlining of national reporting.

13. The Assembly invited the secretariats of the conventions and other international instruments related to environment and sustainable development, as well as relevant organizations, to provide further information on their efforts to implement resolution 54/217 and other complementary activities undertaken in the preparatory process of the review of the implementation of Agenda 21 to be carried out in 2002. It requested the Secretary-General to take this work into account in the preparation of documentation and other preparatory activities for the review.

14. The Assembly adopted a comprehensive resolution (55/199) dealing with the “Ten-year review of progress achieved in the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development” and various aspects of the preparatory process. It recalled that Agenda 21 and the Rio Declaration should constitute the framework within which the other outcomes of the Conference are reviewed, and from within which new challenges and opportunities that have emerged since the Conference are addressed; it noted with appreciation the adoption of the Malmö Ministerial Declaration at the sixth special session of UNEP’s Governing Council and reconfirmed the political importance of the 10-year review of progress achieved since 1992. The Assembly also reconfirmed that Agenda 21 and the Rio Declaration should not be renegotiated and that the review should identify measures for the further implementation of the Agenda and other outcomes of the Conference, including sources of funding.

15. The Assembly decided to organize the 10-year review in 2002 at the summit level, “to reinvigorate the global commitment to sustainable development”, accepted the generous offer of the Government of South Africa to host the summit and decided to call it the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

16. The Assembly further decided that the review should focus on the identification of accomplishments and areas where further efforts are needed to implement Agenda 21 and other outcomes of the Rio Conference and that it should result in action-oriented decisions in those areas. It should address, within the framework of Agenda 21, new challenges and opportunities, and should result in renewed political commitment and support for sustainable development, consistent with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. The Assembly also decided that the Summit, including its preparatory process, should ensure a balance between economic development, social development and environmental protection as interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development. It stressed the importance of early and effective preparations for the Summit and comprehensive assessment of progress achieved, to be carried out at the local, national, regional and international levels by Governments and the United Nations system so as to ensure high-quality input to the review process.

17. The Assembly welcomed the preparatory activities carried out so far, including work undertaken at the regional level. It further welcomed the efforts undertaken by the United Nations Secretariat, in close cooperation with UNEP, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the regional commissions and the secretariats of conventions related to the Rio Conference, as well as other relevant organizations

within and outside the Organization and international and regional financial institutions, including the Global Environment Facility (GEF), to support preparatory activities in a coordinated and mutually reinforcing way.

18. The Assembly welcomed the GEF report on its contributions to the implementation of the Agenda, noted the assistance provided by the Facility to the national implementation of the Agenda, and welcomed its decision to request the Chief Executive Officer to explore the best options for enhancing its support to affected countries, especially in Africa, in implementing the Convention to Combat Desertification. The Assembly also welcomed the initiation of the third replenishment of GEF, and invited it to submit a report to the 2002 review on the results of the replenishment negotiations.

19. The Assembly invited relevant agencies and bodies of the United Nations and international financial institutions involved with the implementation of Agenda 21, including UNEP, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS) (Habitat), GEF and UNDP, as well as conventions related to the Rio Conference, to participate fully in the 10-year review of progress achieved in the implementation of Agenda 21, including in the preparation of reports for submission to the Commission on Sustainable Development at its tenth session and the 2002 summit, in order to reflect their experience and lessons learned, as well as to provide ideas and proposals for the way forward for further implementation of Agenda 21.

20. The Assembly also encouraged effective contributions from and active participation of all major groups, as identified in Agenda 21, at all stages of the preparatory process, in accordance with the Commission's rules and procedures, as well as its established practices for the participation and engagement of such groups.

21. The Assembly decided that the meetings of the tenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development shall be transformed into an open-ended preparatory committee for the Summit, and it invited regional groups to nominate their candidates for the Bureau by the end of 2000. It further decided that the Commission, acting as the preparatory committee, should undertake a comprehensive review and assessment of the implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the Rio Conference on the basis of national assessments and subregional and regional preparatory meetings. It decided that the documentation should be prepared by the Secretary-General, in collaboration with task managers and on the basis of input from relevant international organizations, as well as contributions from major groups; it should identify major accomplishments and lessons learned in the implementation of Agenda 21; it should identify major constraints hindering the implementation of Agenda 21 and propose specific time-bound measures to be undertaken, including institutional and financial requirements, and should identify sources of such support; it should address new challenges and opportunities that have emerged since the Rio Conference and within the framework of Agenda 21; it should also address ways of strengthening the institutional framework for sustainable development, and evaluate and define the role and programme of work of the Commission on Sustainable Development; and it should propose a provisional agenda and possible main themes for the Summit based on the outcome of the preparatory activities, taking into account the input of major groups.

22. The Assembly further decided to convene a three-day meeting of the tenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development so that it can start its work as the preparatory committee for the 2002 Summit, and invited the Commission to start its organizational work to consider progress in preparatory activities, to decide on the specific modalities of its future preparatory meetings and to consider a process for setting the agenda and determining possible main themes for the Summit. The Assembly also decided that in 2002 the Commission, acting as the preparatory committee for the Summit, should hold three additional sessions. At its first and second substantive preparatory sessions, to be held in January and March 2002, the preparatory committee will undertake a comprehensive review and assessment of progress achieved. At its second substantive session, the Committee will agree on the text of a document containing the results of the review and assessment, as well as conclusions and recommendations for further action. Drawing upon the agreed text of such a document, the third and final substantive preparatory session, to be held at ministerial level in May 2002, will prepare a concise and focused document that should emphasize the need for a global partnership to achieve the objectives of sustainable development, reconfirm the need for an integrated and

strategically focused approach to the implementation of Agenda 21 and address the main challenges and opportunities faced by the international community in this area. The document submitted for further consideration and adoption at the 2002 summit should reinvigorate, at the highest political level, the global commitment to a North/South partnership, a higher level of international solidarity to the accelerated implementation of Agenda 21 and the promotion of sustainable development. The Assembly decided to organize the third and final substantive preparatory session at the ministerial level in Indonesia and accepted with gratitude the generous offer of the Government of Indonesia to host it.

B. Further resolutions of significance to UNEP's work programme

23. The Assembly also adopted a series of resolutions that refer to or address the role of UNEP in specific areas. In its resolution 55/7 on "Oceans and the law of the sea", the Assembly recalled the role of international cooperation within a subregional, interregional, regional or global framework to support and supplement efforts of coastal States in promoting the integrated management and sustainable development of coastal and marine areas, and expressed deep concern at the degradation of the marine environment, particularly from land-based activities. The Assembly emphasized the need to bring together the many different economic sectors involved and to protect ecosystems, and, in this context, reaffirmed the importance of ensuring full implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities. It also reiterated its concern at the degradation of the marine environment as a result of pollution from ships, in particular through the illegal release of oil and other harmful substances and as a result of pollution by dumping of hazardous waste, including radioactive materials, nuclear waste and dangerous chemicals.

24. The Assembly requested the Secretary-General, in cooperation with UNEP and other bodies, to review efforts taking place to build capacity as well as to identify the duplications that need to be avoided, and the gaps that may need to be filled for ensuring consistent approaches, both nationally and regionally, with a view to implementing the Convention on the Law of the Sea, and to include a section on this subject in his annual report on oceans and the law of the sea. The Assembly also emphasized the importance of the implementation of Part XII of the Convention in order to protect and preserve the marine environment, including coastal areas, and its living marine resources against pollution and physical degradation, and acknowledged the need to build national capacity for the integrated management of the coastal zone and for the protection of its ecosystem, and invited relevant parts of the United Nations system to promote these aims, including through the provision of the training and institutional support needed to achieve them.

25. The Assembly called upon States to prioritize action on marine pollution from land-based sources, as a means of enhancing their support for the Global Programme of Action, and called for their active collaboration to ensure that the 2001 intergovernmental review of the implementation of the Global Programme of Action will enhance its implementation. It called on United Nations agencies and programmes to fulfil their roles in support of the Global Programme of Action and to provide information to Governments for their consideration at the 2001 review and to the Secretary-General for his annual report on oceans and the law of the sea on their action in this regard and on other steps which could be taken to protect the marine environment.

26. The Assembly also invited UNEP and the World Bank, as part of the preparations for the 2001 review, to consult with Governments, the private sector, financial institutions and donor agencies to review their involvement in the implementation of the Programme and to consider what international support is needed to help overcome obstacles to the preparation and implementation of national and local action programmes and how they can participate actively in partnership-building with developing countries for the transfer of the requisite technology in accordance with the Convention, taking into account the relevant parts of Agenda 21, capacity-building and funding for the implementation of the Programme.

27. In a related resolution (55/8 of 30 October 2000), adopted by a recorded vote of 103 in favour to none against, with 44 abstentions, on "Large-scale pelagic drift-net fishing, unauthorized fishing in zones of national jurisdiction and on the high seas, fisheries by-catch and discards, and other developments", the

Assembly reaffirmed the importance it attached to the long-term conservation, management and sustainable use of marine living resources of the world's oceans and seas. The Assembly noted the adoption by the States members of the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific of the Framework Agreement for the Conservation of Living Marine Resources in the High Seas of the South-east Pacific, and took note with satisfaction of the activities of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, in cooperation with relevant United Nations agencies, in particular UNEP and GEF, aimed at promoting the reduction of by-catch and discards in fisheries.

28. In its resolution 55/203 on "Promoting an integrated approach to the Caribbean Sea area in the context of sustainable development", the Assembly welcomed the adoption, on 16 October 1999 in Aruba, of the Protocol concerning Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities to the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region. It also welcomed the entry into force of the Protocol to the Cartagena Convention on Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife. The Assembly, recognizing that the Caribbean Sea has a unique biodiversity and highly fragile ecosystem, emphasized that Caribbean countries have a high degree of vulnerability occasioned by climate change and variability, associated phenomena, such as sea level rise, the El Niño/Southern Oscillation phenomenon and the increase in the frequency and intensity of natural disasters caused by hurricanes, floods and droughts, and that they are also subject to natural disasters. The Assembly welcomed the establishment of a working group on the El Niño/La Niña phenomenon within the framework of the Inter-agency Task Force on the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction. The Assembly also recognized the Caribbean Environment Outlook process currently being undertaken by UNEP and welcomed the support being provided by UNEP's Caribbean Environment Programme towards its implementation.

29. The Assembly encouraged the promotion of an integrated management approach to the Caribbean Sea area in the context of sustainable development. It called on the United Nations system to assist Caribbean countries and their regional organizations in their efforts to ensure the protection of the Caribbean Sea from degradation as a result of pollution from ships through the release of oil and other harmful substances, from illegal dumping or accidental release of hazardous waste, including radioactive materials, nuclear waste and dangerous chemicals, as well as pollution from land-based activities. The Assembly called on States to take necessary steps to bring into force, and to support the implementation of, the Protocol concerning Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities, and to become contracting parties to international agreements to promote the protection of the marine environment of the Caribbean Sea from pollution and degradation of ships. The Assembly further invited the United Nations system to continue efforts to assist Caribbean countries in becoming parties to the relevant conventions and protocols and in implementing them effectively, and further called on the international community, the United Nations system and the multilateral financial institutions, including GEF, actively to support and further develop and implement such an approach.

30. The importance of adopting an integrated management approach to the Caribbean Sea area in the context of sustainable development was also recognized in resolution 55/17 on "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Caribbean Community".

31. By its resolution 55/202 on the "Further implementation of the outcome of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States", the Assembly noted the work being undertaken by international organizations on a vulnerability index which incorporates environmental and economic vulnerability factors, and urged all relevant organizations to finalize, as a matter of urgency, the work on the development of a vulnerability index for small island developing States. The Assembly reiterated the urgent need for strong and effective implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the Declaration and review document adopted by the Assembly at its twenty-second special session, and requested relevant organs and agencies of the United Nations system to reflect measures for implementation of the Programme of Action in their programmes. The Assembly also invited United Nations organizations, in the preparation of the 10-year review of the outcome of the Rio Conference, to identify measures that would ensure the effective implementation of the Programme of Action. It called on relevant United Nations agencies to support the

efforts of small island developing States in the further implementation of the Programme of Action, for example through the provision of adequate technical and financial resources, and to assist those States in their efforts to respond adequately to the challenges of globalization.

32. The Assembly adopted resolution 55/121 on the effects of atomic radiation without a vote. Stressing its concern about the potentially harmful effects on present and future generations resulting from the levels of radiation to which humankind and the environment are exposed, the Assembly commended the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation for the valuable contribution it has made since its inception 45 years ago to wider knowledge and understanding of the levels, effects and risks of ionizing radiation, and for fulfilling its original mandate with scientific authority and independence of judgment. The Assembly reaffirmed the decision to maintain the present functions and independent role of the Scientific Committee, including its reporting arrangements, and requested UNEP to continue providing support for the effective conduct of the Committee's work and for the dissemination of its findings to the Assembly, the scientific community and the public.

33. In resolution 55/201 dealing with the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Assembly decided to proclaim 22 May, the date of the adoption of the text of the Convention, as the International Day for Biological Diversity henceforth, and reiterated its request to the Secretary-General, the Executive Director of UNEP and the Executive Secretary of the Convention to take all steps necessary to ensure the successful observance of the Day. The Assembly urged Member States that have not joined the Convention to become parties to it and called on Member States that are parties to sign and ratify the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

34. The Assembly reaffirmed the importance of the decision of the Conference of the Parties on the adoption of its programme of work and the thematic approach to guide its work in the development of the Convention, including its in-depth consideration of ecosystems and other cross-cutting issues, and urged developed countries to facilitate the transfer of environmentally sound biotechnology for the effective implementation of the Cartagena Protocol. The Assembly also welcomed the decision of the Conference to contribute to the 10-year review of the implementation of Agenda 21 and decided to invite the Executive Secretary and, if appropriate, the President of the sixth meeting of the Conference to report to it at its relevant session. The Assembly recognized the importance of rapid development and implementation of the Strategic Plan for the Convention, and welcomed the collaborative work between the Convention on Biological Diversity and related conventions, in particular the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat.

35. The Assembly also welcomed the decision of the Conference of the Parties regarding its programme of work for forest biological diversity and encouraged the parties to cooperate with the United Nations Forum on Forests, in particular with respect to respecting, preserving and maintaining the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles. The Assembly also took note of the fact that the provisions of the Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights and the Convention are interrelated, in particular with respect to intellectual property rights and relevant provisions of the Convention, and invited the World Trade Organization and the World Intellectual Property Organization, within their respective mandates, to explore this relationship.

36. The Assembly also welcomed the progress made in implementing cooperation with the secretariats of the Climate Change Convention and the Convention to Combat Desertification, encouraged further cooperation and stressed the need to enhance complementarities between the Biodiversity Convention and the Climate Change Convention in order to ensure that their activities are mutually supportive. The Assembly also noted the work of GEF in assisting developing countries and countries with economies in transition in the implementation of the Convention; and, with regard to capacity-building activities relating to the Cartagena Protocol, urged the Facility to enhance its support.

37. In its resolution 55/204, entitled "Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa", the Assembly welcomed the convening of the fourth session of the Conference of the Parties to the

Convention in Bonn, Germany, from 11 to 22 December 2000, and welcomed the very large number of ratifications of the Convention. The Assembly also called on GEF to enhance its ongoing support for land degradation activities in developing countries and for the Facility and its implementing agencies to strengthen their cooperation with the Global Mechanism and the secretariat of the Convention.

38. In a decision on “Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind”, the Assembly expressed regret that negotiations could not be completed at the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Climate Change Convention in The Hague and called upon all Parties to intensify political consultations to reach a successful conclusion at a resumed session. The Assembly further invited the Conference at its seventh session to contribute to the preparation of the 10-year review of the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, and requested the Executive Secretary of the Convention to report to the Commission on Sustainable Development at its tenth session to this end.

39. By its resolution 55/205 on the “World Solar Programme 1996-2005”, the Assembly invited the international community to support, as appropriate, by providing financial resources, the efforts of developing countries to move towards sustainable patterns of energy production and consumption. It recognized that rural energy services, including their financing, should be designed to maximize local ownership, as appropriate. It also reiterated its call on all relevant funding institutions and bilateral and multilateral donors, as well as regional funding institutions and non-governmental organizations, to support the efforts being made for the development of the renewable energy sector in developing countries, on the basis of environment-friendly, renewable sources of energy of demonstrated viability, while taking fully into account the development structure of energy-based economies of developing countries, and to assist in the attainment of the levels of investment necessary to expand energy supplies beyond urban areas. The Assembly recognized that the wider use of available renewable energy technologies requires the diffusion of available technologies on a global scale, including through North-South and South-South cooperation.

40. The Assembly encouraged the Ad Hoc Inter-agency Task Force on Energy to continue its efforts in order to ensure that the work of the World Solar Programme is fully integrated and brought into the mainstream of the efforts of the United Nations system in achieving the objectives of sustainable development and in coordinating the contributions of all relevant organizations of the system to the consideration of the theme of energy by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its ninth session and at the 10-year review of the outcome of the Rio Conference in 2002. The Assembly further requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and in cooperation with UNEP, GEF, UNDP and other relevant organizations, to submit to the Assembly at its fifty-sixth session a report on concrete actions being taken for the promotion of new and renewable sources of energy, including the effective implementation of, and mobilization of resources for, the World Solar Programme.

41. In resolution 55/197 on “International cooperation to reduce the impact of the El Niño phenomenon”, the Assembly, reaffirming the importance of international cooperation for a better scientific understanding of the El Niño phenomenon, and of developing strategies that aim to prevent, mitigate and rehabilitate the damage caused by resultant natural disasters, welcomed the establishment of the working group on the El Niño/La Niña phenomenon within the framework of the Inter-agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction. The Assembly also called on the Secretary-General and the relevant United Nations organs, funds and programmes, in particular those taking part in the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, to adopt, as appropriate, the necessary measures for the prompt establishment of the international centre for the study of the El Niño phenomenon in Guayaquil, Ecuador, and invited the international community to provide scientific, technical and financial assistance and cooperation for that purpose, in accordance with Assembly resolution 54/220.

42. In its resolution 55/189 on the “Status of preparation for the International Year of Mountains, 2002”, the Assembly welcomed the activities being undertaken in preparation for the observance of the Year and encouraged the continuation of these efforts. The Assembly further encouraged all States, the United Nations system and all other actors to take advantage of the Year to ensure the present and future well-being of

mountain communities by promoting conservation and sustainable development in mountain areas and by increasing awareness and knowledge of mountain ecosystems and their dynamics, functioning and overriding importance in providing a number of crucial goods and services essential to the well-being of rural and urban, highland and lowland people, particularly water supply and food security. The Assembly encouraged United Nations organizations and the private sector to support programmes and projects for the Year.

43. In its resolution 55/196, the Assembly proclaimed the year 2003 as the International Year of Freshwater. The Assembly invited the Sub-Committee on Water Resources of the Administrative Committee on Coordination to serve as the coordinating entity for the Year and to develop preliminary proposals for consideration by the Assembly. It also encouraged all actors to take advantage of the Year to increase awareness of the importance of freshwater and to promote action at all levels.

44. The Assembly adopted resolution 55/182 on “International trade and development”, in which it emphasized the fact that, in line with Agenda 21 and the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, Governments should have the objective of ensuring that trade and environmental policies are mutually supportive, so as to achieve sustainable development; in so doing, their environmental policies and measures with a potential trade impact should not be used for protectionist purposes. The same provision appeared in resolution 55/183, on the issue of “Commodities”.

45. By its resolution 55/44, on “International cooperation and coordination for the human and ecological rehabilitation and economic development of the Semipalatinsk region of Kazakhstan”, the Assembly, recognizing that the Semipalatinsk nuclear testing ground remains a matter of serious concern with regard to the consequences for the lives and health of the people and the environment of the region, stressed that the international community should pay due attention to the issue of the human, ecological and socio-economic dimensions of the situation in the region. It recognized the need to coordinate national and international efforts aimed at the rehabilitation of the health and environment of the region. It also took note of the Secretary-General’s report on measures taken to solve health, ecological, economic and humanitarian problems and to meet the needs of the region, and invited him to pursue a consultative process, with the participation of interested States and relevant United Nations agencies, on modalities for mobilizing the necessary support to seek solutions to the problems and needs of the region.

46. In its resolution 55/33 S on “Mongolia’s international security and nuclear-weapon-free status”, the Assembly invited States to continue their cooperation with Mongolia in taking the necessary measures to consolidate and strengthen that country’s independence, economic security and ecological balance. The Assembly also requested the Secretary-General and relevant United Nations bodies to provide assistance to Mongolia for taking these measures.

47. By its resolution 55/49 on a “Zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic”, the Assembly, stressing the importance that States of the zone attach to the protection of the environment of the region, and recognizing the threat that pollution from any source poses to the marine and coastal environment, its ecological balance and its resources, called upon Member States to continue their efforts towards the achievement of appropriate regulation of maritime transport of radioactive and toxic wastes.

48. By its resolution 55/122, on “International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space”, the Assembly recommended that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space consider at its thirty-eighth session matters relating to remote sensing of the Earth by satellites, including applications for developing countries and monitoring of the Earth’s environment, as well as the implementation of an integrated, space-based global natural disaster management system. The Assembly recommended that more attention be paid to all matters relating to the protection and preservation of the outer space environment, especially those potentially affecting the Earth’s environment. The Assembly also emphasized the need to increase the benefits of space technology and its applications, including mitigation of the consequences of natural disasters, in particular in developing countries, and

agreed that the benefits of space technology and its applications should be prominently brought to the attention of conferences organized within the United Nations system and promoted towards achieving the objectives of those conferences and implementing the Millennium Declaration.

49. On 4 December, the Assembly adopted resolution 55/77 on “Assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa”, noting with concern that the declining socio-economic situation, compounded by political instability, internal strife, human rights violations and natural disasters, has led to increased numbers of refugees and displaced persons in some countries of Africa. The Assembly remained particularly concerned about the impact of large-scale refugee populations on the security, socio-economic situation and environment of countries of asylum. It also noted the link between human rights violations, poverty, natural disasters and environmental degradation and population displacement, and it called for redoubled and concerted efforts by States, in collaboration with the Organization of African Unity, to promote and protect human rights for all and to address these problems. It welcomed the programmes carried out by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) with host Governments, the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and the international community to address the environmental impact of refugee populations; and it called upon the international donor community to provide material and financial assistance for the implementation of programmes intended for the rehabilitation of the environment and infrastructure affected by refugees in countries of asylum.

50. Also on 4 December, the Assembly adopted resolution 55/80 on the “International Decade of the World’s Indigenous People”, which, among other things, affirmed that the development of indigenous people within their countries will contribute to the socio-economic, cultural and environmental advancement of all the countries of the world; it welcomed the establishment by the Economic and Social Council of a Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues; and it invited United Nations bodies to designate focal points for the coordination of activities related to the Decade with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

51. In its resolution 55/209 entitled “Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources”, adopted on 20 December by a recorded vote (147 to 2, with 3 abstentions), the Assembly called on “Israel, the occupying Power, not to exploit, to cause loss or depletion of or to endanger the natural resources in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan”. It reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the population of the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources, including land and water.

52. On 8 December 2000, the Assembly adopted several resolutions on the issue of decolonization, many of which took note of the environmental conditions in Non-Self-Governing Territories. In particular, resolution 55/139, on the “Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations”, which was adopted by a recorded vote of 109 in favour to none against, with 50 abstentions, called on such bodies to provide information on environmental problems and on the impact of natural disasters facing the Territories.

53. The Assembly adopted resolution 55/33 K on the “Observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament and arms control”, by a recorded vote of 165 in favour to none against, with 4 abstentions. Recognizing that it is necessary to take duly into account the agreements adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, and mindful of the detrimental environmental effects of the use of nuclear weapons, the Assembly reaffirmed that international disarmament forums should take fully into account relevant environmental norms in negotiating treaties and agreements on disarmament and arms limitation and that all States should fully contribute to ensuring compliance with such norms in the implementation of treaties and conventions to which they are parties. The Assembly called upon States to adopt measures contributing to ensuring the application of scientific and technological progress in the framework of international security, disarmament and other related spheres, without detriment to the environment or to its effective contribution to attaining sustainable development.

54. In a related resolution, 55/33 Q, on “Illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons”, the Assembly recalled a Presidential statement issued by the Security Council on 24 September 1999 and its request therein to the Secretary-General to develop, with the assistance of technical experts and the support of Member States, a reference manual for use in the field on ecologically safe methods of weapons, ammunition and explosives destruction. It considered that the United Nations could, through a coordinated approach, collect, share and disseminate to States information on useful and successful practices to prevent illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, and it underscored the role of the mechanism for the coordination of action on small arms, of which UNEP is a member. The Assembly further decided to convene a United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in New York from 9 to 20 July 2001.

55. By its resolution 55/23 entitled “United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations”, the Assembly, bearing in mind the valuable contribution that dialogue among civilizations can make to an improved awareness and understanding of the values shared by all humankind, invited Governments, the United Nations system and other relevant international and non-governmental organizations to continue and to intensify planning and organizing programmes in order to promote the concept of dialogue among civilizations through such means as seminars, conferences and the distribution of information. It further encouraged all actors to develop appropriate initiatives to promote dialogue in all fields with a view to fostering mutual understanding among and within civilizations. The Assembly also decided to devote two days of plenary meetings at its fifty-sixth session, on 3 and 4 December 2001, to consideration of the item, and encouraged representation at the highest level.

56. By its resolution 55/213, the Assembly decided that a high-level international intergovernmental event on financing for development should be scheduled for the first quarter of 2002, and extended an invitation to interested countries to consider hosting or confirming existing offers to host the event. The Assembly also decided that the Preparatory Committee for the event should hold a final substantive session from 14 to 25 February 2002, on the understanding that the second substantive session will be held from 12 to 23 February 2001 and the third substantive session from 30 April to 11 May 2001. The Assembly requested the Secretary-General to address a letter to all Governments further sensitizing them to the high profile and high-level participation that the preparatory process and the event deserve. In a related resolution (55/186) entitled “Towards a strengthened and stable international financial architecture responsive to the priorities of growth and development, especially in developing countries, and to the promotion of economic and social equity”, the Assembly noted that the high-level intergovernmental event on financing for development will provide a unique opportunity to consider in an integrated manner all sources of financing for development, and stressed that in the Millennium Declaration the heads of State and government had decided to make every effort to ensure its success.

57. The Assembly adopted resolution 55/214 entitled “Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries”, in which it recalled that the Conference will be convened from 14 to 20 May 2001 and will be hosted by the European Union in Brussels. The Assembly emphasized the importance of effective participation by the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, welcomed the statement of the Administrative Committee on Coordination on the Conference, and called upon the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Secretary-General of the Conference, to convene inter-agency consultations within the context of the machinery of the Administrative Committee on Coordination to ensure the full mobilization and coordination of all relevant organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system during the preparatory process for the Conference and the implementation and follow-up of its outcome.

58. Two resolutions were also adopted on the special session of the General Assembly on the overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II). They are resolution 55/194, which pertains to the scope to be covered by the review, and resolution 55/195, on preparations for the review. In the latter, the Assembly reiterated its invitation to all relevant spheres of the United Nations system to continue to contribute to and be actively involved in the preparatory process and the special session.

II. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS FIFTY-FOURTH SESSION

59. Three resolutions were adopted based on documentation submitted by UNEP, namely, 54/216 entitled "Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme", 54/217 entitled "Enhancing complementarities among international instruments related to environment and sustainable development" and 54/45 entitled "Question of Antarctica".

60. Resolution 54/216 continued the trend established at the fifty-third session of the Assembly to adopt substantive resolutions related to the report of the UNEP Governing Council, and should also be seen in the context of supporting the revitalization of the Programme. Of particular significance are paragraph 3, related to environmental conventions, and paragraph 4, in which the Assembly encouraged the Governing Council, in particular, to contribute to the preparation of the 10-year review of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 2002. In addition, the resolution called on all countries to ensure the provision of sufficient, stable and predictable financial resources for the successful implementation of the work programme for the biennium 2000-2001 and requested the Secretary-General to provide the necessary resources from the regular United Nations budget to UNEP for the biennium. The Assembly also encouraged UNEP's supporting role in developing countries, particularly in Africa, through the development of policy support and capacity-building for international environmental negotiation, through such steps as the revitalization of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment. Furthermore, the Assembly supported the proposals made by UNEP and others for enhancing linkages and coordination within and among environmental and environment-related conventions.

61. Resolution 54/217 on "Enhancing complementarities among international instruments related to environment and sustainable development" was adopted in response to the report of the Secretary-General on international institutional arrangements related to environment and development, prepared by UNEP, with input from the secretariats of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Climate Change Convention and the Convention to Combat Desertification. It considerably enhanced the recognition of UNEP's role in the coordination of and support for the development of coherent interlinkages among environmental conventions and provided a clear rationale for UNEP's institutional role in this area, as well as a role for the Environmental Management Group. It took note with appreciation of the report of the Secretary-General, and also noted Governing Council decision 20/28 on interlinkages among global environmental issues and human needs.

62. The Assembly encouraged the conferences of the parties to, and the permanent secretariats of, the Climate Change Convention, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention to Combat Desertification to examine further opportunities and measures to strengthen their complementarities and to improve scientific assessments of ecological linkages among the three conventions. The Assembly also stressed the need for the integrated consideration of linkages, both among sectors and between sectoral and cross-sectoral aspects of Agenda 21. It emphasized the importance of facilitating and supporting the enhancement of linkages and coordination within and among environment-related conventions, including by UNEP, and in this regard supported the establishment of the Environmental Management Group for the purpose of enhancing inter-agency coordination, as stipulated in resolution 53/242.

63. The Assembly also encouraged the secretariats of the various environmental and environment-related conventions and international organizations, with full respect for the status of the secretariats of the conventions and the autonomous decision-making prerogatives of the conferences of the parties to the conventions concerned, to strengthen cooperation in the implementation of those conventions by:

- (a) identifying opportunities for complementarity of activities undertaken to facilitate the implementation of commitments made by the parties to the various conventions;
- (b) encouraging further scientific analyses by relevant international organizations, such as UNEP, the secretariats of the conventions, their subsidiary bodies, the United Nations Secretariat and relevant international scientific bodies, to identify possible activities with potential multiple benefits and to bring them to the attention of conferences of the parties;

(c) promoting more effective and coherent support from international organizations and financial institutions and mechanisms for national action aimed at the implementation of the conventions, particularly in the area of capacity-building; (d) addressing practical issues, such as more effective information exchange, enhanced awareness-raising and streamlining of national reporting; (e) supporting, upon request, efforts being made at the national level towards adopting an integrated and holistic approach to the implementation of environmental and environment-related conventions; and (f) bringing relevant issues to the attention of the Assembly and relevant intergovernmental bodies for consideration of Member States and formulation of agreed policy recommendations to promote a more holistic approach. The resolution further requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Executive Director of UNEP and the executive secretaries of the conventions, to prepare a report on the implementation of such resolution to the fifty-fifth session of the Assembly.

64. In its resolution 54/45 entitled “Question of Antarctica”, the Assembly recognized that the 1959 Antarctic Treaty, which provided for demilitarization of the continent, the prohibition of nuclear explosions and disposal of nuclear wastes, the freedom of scientific research and the free exchange of scientific information, is in furtherance of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. The Assembly welcomed the entry into force of the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty on 14 January 1998, which designated Antarctica as a natural reserve devoted to peace and science. The Assembly recalled the statement in Agenda 21, adopted by the Rio Conference, that States carrying out research activities in Antarctica should continue to ensure that data and information resulting from such research are freely available to the international community, and that they should enhance the access of the international scientific community and specialized agencies of the United Nations to such data and information. The Assembly took note of the report of the Secretary-General and the role accorded by him to UNEP in preparing the report, and also of the twenty-first, twenty-second and twenty-third Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meetings. It welcomed the invitations to the Executive Director of UNEP to attend the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meetings and the regular provision of information by the Treaty’s Consultative Parties to the Secretary-General on their meetings and activities in Antarctica.

65. A number of other resolutions of direct relevance to UNEP were adopted. In resolution 54/218 on the “Implementation of and follow-up to the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly”, the Assembly called on the Commission on Sustainable Development to continue to complement and provide interlinkages to the work of other United Nations organs, organizations and bodies active in the field of sustainable development. It called on the Commission to play its role in assessing the opportunities and challenges of globalization as they relate to sustainable development and to perform its functions in coordination with other subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council and with related organizations and institutions, including making recommendations to the Council, bearing in mind the interrelated outcomes of recent United Nations conferences. It renewed its request to the Commission’s secretariat to invite Governments to submit proposals on how to improve the guidelines for the elaboration of national reports and to prepare a report to be submitted to the Commission as part of the preparations for the comprehensive review of the implementation of Agenda 21. It invited the relevant functional commissions which are implementing chapters of Agenda 21, as well as regional commissions, to provide reports, through the Council, on how their activities are contributing to the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 for consideration at the fifty-fifth session of the Assembly.

66. The Assembly also invited the Governing Council of UNEP to consider how the activities of UNEP are contributing to the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, and to submit its views to the Assembly at the earliest opportunity. The Assembly invited GEF and the secretariats of the Climate Change Convention, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention to Combat Desertification to do the same. The Secretary-General was invited, while preparing the report requested by the Assembly in paragraph 6 of its resolution 53/188, to take into account the preliminary discussions at the Commission’s eighth session and by the Economic and Social Council, and to include in that report proposals for the analytical reports to be prepared for the review process.

67. In each of the three resolutions respectively adopted relating to the Climate Change Convention, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention to Combat Desertification, paragraphs were included that encourage the conferences of the parties to those conventions to examine further appropriate opportunities and measures to strengthen their complementarities and to improve the scientific assessments of ecological linkages between the three conventions. They encouraged the secretariats of various environmental and environment-related conventions and other international organizations, with full respect for the status of the conferences of the parties of the conventions concerned, to strengthen cooperation with a view to facilitating progress in their implementation at the international, regional, subregional and national levels.

68. In resolution 54/222 on “Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind”, the Assembly called on all States parties to continue to take effective steps to implement their commitments under the Climate Change Convention in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. It requested the Secretary-General to review the functioning of the institutional linkage of the Convention secretariat to the United Nations not later than 31 December 2001, in consultation with the Conference of the Parties, with a view to making such modifications as may be considered desirable by both parties, and to report thereon to the Assembly.

69. In resolution 54/221 on the “Convention on Biological Diversity”, the Assembly called on Governments, in cooperation with the Conference of the Parties, to use science-based analysis to study and monitor closely the evolution of new technologies to prevent possible adverse effects on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, which might have an impact on farmers and local communities. In addition, the Assembly invited all funding institutions and bilateral and multilateral donors, as well as regional funding institutions and non-governmental organizations, to cooperate with the secretariat of the Convention in the implementation of the programme of work. It invited the Executive Secretary of the Convention to report to the Assembly on ongoing work regarding the Convention.

70. In resolution 54/223 on “Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa”, the Assembly called on Governments, multilateral financial institutions, regional development banks, regional economic integration organizations and all other interested organizations, as well as non-governmental organizations and the private sector, to contribute generously to the funds set up under the Convention. It also called on the international community, particularly the developed countries and the United Nations system, and invited the multilateral financial institutions, the private sector and all other interested actors, to support the efforts of affected developing countries in the processes of elaborating and implementing action programmes to combat desertification, including interregional programmes and platforms of cooperation, by providing them with financial resources and other forms of assistance.

71. In addition, the Assembly called on the Convention secretariat and the Global Mechanism to cooperate fully in carrying out their activities as provided for in their respective mandates. It called on all remaining countries that are not yet parties to the Convention to ratify or accede to it as soon as possible. It invited all other relevant organizations and programmes, particularly UNDP, the World Bank and other members of the Facilitation Committee of the Global Mechanism, to make contributions to enable the Mechanism to support implementation of the Convention. It also invited affected developing countries that have not yet adopted their national action programmes, as well as regional and subregional bodies, to accelerate the process of elaboration and adoption of their action programmes with a view to finalizing them no later than the end of 2000. Further, the Assembly requested the Global Mechanism to carry out its mandate of assisting affected developing country parties in the implementation of the Convention.

72. In its resolution 54/224 on “Implementation of the outcome of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States”, the Assembly called on Governments, the regional commissions and organizations and other intergovernmental organizations to take into account those areas identified in the review document for priority action, and urged them to take the action necessary for the further implementation and effective follow-up of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. Further, it called on all stakeholders, in

particular local communities, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, to take the action necessary for the further implementation of and effective follow-up to the Programme of Action. In addition, the Assembly invited the Commission on Sustainable Development to consider in its work programme matters relating to the further implementation of the Programme of Action, bearing in mind the report of the General Assembly on its twenty-second special session. The Assembly urged all relevant organizations to finalize, preferably before the end of the year 2000, work on the development of a vulnerability index, in particular for the small island developing States, which would assist in defining the vulnerability of those States and in identifying the challenges to their sustainable development, for consideration by the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly at the appropriate time.

73. The Assembly also adopted resolution 54/225 on “Promoting the integrated management approach to the Caribbean Sea area in the context of sustainable development”. In that resolution, the Assembly noted the problem of marine pollution from land-based sources, and called on the Caribbean countries to develop further an integrated management approach to the Caribbean Sea area in the context of sustainable development. It called on the international community and the United Nations system, particularly the relevant agencies, to support efforts to develop further and implement the above-mentioned approach. The Assembly called on Member States to give priority to improving their emergency response capabilities and increasing their participation in existing mechanisms, so as to allow for a timely, effective and coordinated response to natural disasters and for the containment of environmental damage in the Caribbean Sea area in the event of an accident or incident relating to maritime transport.

74. The Assembly invited all parties concerned to take action and to address land-based sources of marine pollution. It encouraged the further development of the integrated management approach to the Caribbean Sea area in the context of sustainable development, to include environmental, economic, social, legal and institutional elements, and to take into account the experience gained, as well as the provisions of Agenda 21, the Programme of Action adopted by the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, the outcome of the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly, the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development and the Convention on the Law of the Sea.

75. By its resolution 54/33 on the “Results of the review by the Commission on Sustainable Development of the sectoral theme of ‘Oceans and seas’: international coordination and cooperation”, the Assembly endorsed the recommendations made by the Commission through the Economic and Social Council under the sectoral theme on oceans and seas regarding international coordination and cooperation, and decided to establish an open-ended informal process of consultation in order to facilitate the annual review by the Assembly of developments in oceans areas by considering the report of the Secretary-General and suggesting particular issues to be considered by it, with an emphasis on identifying where coordination and cooperation at the intergovernmental and inter-agency levels could be enhanced. The resolution requested the Secretary-General, working through appropriate United Nations bodies and in cooperation with the heads of relevant organizations, funds or programmes of the Organization, to undertake measures aimed at ensuring a more effective collaboration and coordination between relevant parts of the United Nations system on ocean affairs and the law of the sea, and improving the effectiveness, transparency and responsiveness of the Administrative Committee on Coordination Sub-Committee on Oceans and Coastal Areas.

76. In its resolution 54/31 on “Oceans and law of the sea”, the Assembly encouraged States to continue to support the regional seas programme, which has achieved success in a number of geographical areas, and to work within UNEP to enhance cooperation in the protection of the marine environment.

77. In its resolution 54/215 on the “World Solar Programme 1996-2005”, the Assembly called on all relevant funding institutions and bilateral and multilateral donors, as well as regional funding institutions and non-governmental organizations, to support the efforts being made for the development of the renewable energy sector in developing countries on the basis of environment-friendly, renewable sources of energy of demonstrated viability, while taking fully into account the development structure of energy-based economies of developing countries, and to assist in the attainment of investment necessary to expand energy supplies beyond urban areas.

78. The Assembly invited all Governments to encourage the involvement of all relevant stakeholders, including the private sector, in the promotion of research on and development of renewable sources of energy in the implementation of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005. It also invited the Inter-agency Working Group on Energy to facilitate the contribution of the work under the World Solar Programme to the consideration of the theme of energy by the Commission of Sustainable Development. Further, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with UNESCO and in cooperation with UNEP and other relevant organizations, to submit to the Assembly at its fifty-fifth session a report on concrete action being taken for the effective implementation of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005, including promotion for mobilization of resources. It also requested him to include in his report on energy and sustainable development to the Commission a report on action to be taken to implement resolution 54/215, including further recommendations on appropriate modalities to promote new and renewable sources of energy.

79. In its resolution 54/214 on the “Conservation and sustainable development of Central African forest ecosystems”, the Assembly invited the international community to support the countries of Central Africa in efforts to sustain the forest ecosystem, including through the provision of financial and technical assistance on a regional basis. It encouraged the international community, including GEF and the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests, when considering ways and means of achieving the conservation and sustainable management of all types of forests, to take into account the forests of the Central African subregion.

80. Finally, the Assembly adopted resolution 54/66 entitled “Effects of atomic radiation”, in which it reaffirmed the decision to maintain the present functions and independent role of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, including the present reporting arrangements. It endorsed the Committee's plans for its future activities in the field of scientific review and assessment, including the publication of its comprehensive report in the year 2000. The Assembly requested the Committee to continue its work, including its important activities to increase knowledge of the levels, effects and risks of ionizing radiation from all sources, and requested UNEP to continue to provide support for the effective conduct of the work of the Scientific Committee and the dissemination of its findings to the General Assembly, the scientific community and the public.
