

**General Assembly**
Economic and Social CouncilDistr.
GENERALA/44/256/Add.2 ✓
E/1989/66/Add.2
14 June 1989

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Forty-fourth session
Item 83 (f) of the preliminary list*
DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC
CO-OPERATION: ENVIRONMENTECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
Second regular session of 1989
DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL
ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION:
ENVIRONMENTQuestion of the convening of a United Nations conference
on environment and developmentReport of the Secretary-GeneralAddendumAnnex II

SUMMARY OF VIEWS ON THE CONFERENCE

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I. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

A. Comments by Governments

1. France. The decision to organize a second United Nations conference on environment in 1992, at the latest, is most welcome. Nearly 20 years after Stockholm, however, the same exercise should not be repeated. As noted by the General Assembly in resolution 43/196 of 20 December 1980, the future conference could, inter alia,

"Review trends in policies and action ... to protect and enhance the environment and to examine how environmental concerns have been incorporated in economic and social policies and planning since the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in 1972".

That review will provide the opportunity for a useful evaluation, but it should not in any case lead to a declamatory conference. Faced with urgent problems, often global in scope, France would like an operational conference which could propose solutions to the problems about which the first United Nations Conference warned the international community.

2. Poland. The Government is fully in favour of holding a conference on the environment. The topic represents an attempt to address one of today's major challenges, which at the same time constitutes one of the leading global issues in the world's contemporary socio-economic development. The conference, by integrating ecological issues with long-term economic growth, would constitute an excellent platform for reviewing, on the twentieth anniversary of the 1972 Stockholm Conference, the progress achieved in environmental protection and in the implementation, on an international scale, of the recommendations of the World Commission for Environment and Development and the Environmental Perspective to the Year 2000 and Beyond and, in that context, laying down a programme for future activities. A conference on such an important topic would come as yet another example of the universal character and significance of the United Nations in the present-day world and an example of support for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

3. Increased international co-operation in the field of environmental protection, involving countries of different levels of economic development and different socio-political systems and reflecting an intimate interconnection between the ecosystems, might speed up the process of joining the existing conventions and appropriate protocols (concerning the protection of the atmosphere, inland waters, forests, surface of the Earth and seas and oceans). It seems important that the conference should not become a one-time international event, but should mark the beginning of a long-range process of solving the problems related to the environment and development.

4. Poland attaches great importance to co-operation in the field of environmental protection on a subregional, regional and global scale. That co-operation should enhance national efforts made by each country to protect its natural environment

and, consequently, that of the neighbouring countries, and made on a broader scale, since pollution knows no state borders. The co-operation should not be confined merely to the otherwise vital international legal regulations, but should make it possible - through assistance, including transfer of technology and participation in the funding of projects - for ecological standards to be observed by countries not in a position to allocate adequate financial resources to environmental protection.

5. Zimbabwe. A conference on environment and development is long overdue, considering that the last one was held 17 years ago.

B. Comments of organizations and programmes
of the United Nations system

United Nations Centre for Human Settlements

6. General Assembly resolution 43/196 of 20 December 1988 was brought to the attention of the Commission on Human Settlements at its twelfth session, held in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, from 24 April to 3 May 1989. The views expressed by the Commission will be communicated to the Secretariat. 1/

II. SCOPE, OBJECTIVES, CONTENT AND TITLE OF THE CONFERENCE

A. Scope

1. Comments by Governments

7. Finland. The background document prepared by UNEP for consultations held at the ministerial level, which took place in Nairobi in January 1989, and certain general conclusions reached at that meeting form the scope of the conference.

8. France. In spite of scientific uncertainties, the environmental problems and objectives have been identified to a large extent. The following main themes should be discussed: climate change, atmospheric pollution, desertification and deforestation, transport of toxic products and wastes, pollution of the seas and oceans, and transfrontier pollution of continental waters. In order to ensure an efficient pragmatic approach, France would like the preparation of the agenda to take two principles into account:

(a) The protection of the environment should be the central theme of the conference. Environmental issues are "naturally" linked to economic growth, poverty, international trade and demography; one should take greater account of environmental considerations, conservation and management of natural resources in the economic sector, in order to promote environmentally sound development policies. The main interest of the conference lies in the specificity of its recommendations, which should lead to better environmental protection. Without those recommendations, environmental issues might become diluted in too broad a framework. Topics relating, *inter alia*, to international security belong to other more appropriate forums;

(b) The second environment conference should define the tools necessary to ensure the protection and improvement of the natural environment. Institutional and statutory measures at the national and international level, economic and financial mechanisms, and various forms of multilateral co-operation should be analysed and evaluated with a view to developing coherent policies and ensuring environmental protection in a development context.

9. Senegal. The conference should deal with global issues of sustainable development and its objective should be to ensure rational development. It is suggested that the conference might be held at the ministerial level.

2. Comments of organizations and programmes of the United Nations system

United Nations Development Programme

10. The conference should build on the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (A/42/427, annex) and bring world leaders up to date on the diverse nature of the environment crises and their gravity, and should explain the imperative need for collective action. But it must do more: a specific global plan of action to address priority issues should be presented and agreed upon in principle. The outcome of the Second World Climate Conference in 1990, the special session of the General Assembly devoted to international economic co-operation, in particular to the revitalization of economic growth and development of the developing countries, as well as the regional conferences being organized by the regional commissions, should serve as major inputs to the preparation of the 1992 conference.

3. Comments of other organizations

European Economic Community

11. The conference should afford a wide overview of the progress achieved since 1972, the current state of the environment and the goals that we should all set ourselves in the short (until the year 2000) and medium term (to the year 2035). The objective of the conference, of course, must be the strengthening of international co-operation among all countries in favour of the global environment.

B. Objectives and content

1. Comments by Governments

12. Finland. The following points in General Assembly resolution 43/196 should be emphasized: the urgent nature of transboundary environmental threat, the responsibility of the industrialized countries as the main pollutants and the financial support to the developing countries concerning their environmental problems. The main task of the conference is to open a new era in the history of the United Nations in the field of the environment. Furthermore, the conference

should tackle the question of strengthening the global "environmental régime" within the framework of the United Nations system.

13. The basic content of the conference is formed by the issues given in the Nairobi background document: 2/ (a) atmospheric issues (climate change, acid rains, ozone depletion); (b) fresh water; (c) oceans and coastal areas; (d) land degradation, desertification and deforestation; (e) hazardous wastes and toxic chemicals; and (f) loss of biological diversities. The conference should widely address the interlinkages between environment, development and economics, and the major part of the environmental problems should be considered, taking into account those linkages. Certain concrete agreements should emerge as outcome of the conference (for example, a convention on climate change).

14. One of the most important subjects to be addressed by the conference is the financing and transfer of technology as regards the implementation of international agreements on protection of the environment, at both the global and regional levels. Henceforth one must not lose sight of the global principle of sustainable and environmentally sound development regarding all human activities. On the other hand, it is perhaps not necessary to include this principle in the title of the conference.

15. France. Particular attention should be given to the following themes:

(a) The increasing complexity and urgency of ecological problems raises the question of whether existing institutions are able to fulfil their purpose by the year 2000. It will be necessary to evaluate the work accomplished by these organizations and the present structures during the conference, with due respect to the Charter of the United Nations. The main elements (coexistence of a "co-ordinator" and of sectoral organizations) should not automatically be questioned. Their functioning could be improved;

(b) Since all countries have a duty to protect the environment while not being always equipped with the necessary tools to fight pollution and the depletion of natural resources, it is imperative to consider which mechanisms would facilitate the protection of the environment in developing countries, taking into account the technical as well as the financial nature of the problems. The transfer of non- or little polluting technologies and access to data from Earth monitoring systems should play an important part in this respect. Participants will have to define ways and means of increasing the efficiency of those developments and projects of industrialized countries which have an important environmental component, such as the fight against desertification, deforestation, waste management and water purification policies, and access to potable water;

(c) The essential part played by information, evaluation and diagnostic systems should be recognized. A "state of the planet" report could be presented to the conference. Action can only be envisaged after an in-depth continuous study is carried out of the planet and of the changes affecting the biosphere. Several indicator systems already exist: the Global Environmental Monitoring System (GEMS); the "Plan Vigie", the global programme on environmental changes; INFOTERRA, the International Referral System for Sources of Environmental Information; the

Global Resource Information Data Base (GRID) has also been established. Other bodies, such as FAO and UNESCO, have numerous information systems.

16. In that respect, participants could encourage the rational management of achievements (co-ordination, dissemination of information) and the reinforcement of existing systems (support to regional remote sensing or thematic mapping centres). In the same spirit one should develop environmental education and training programmes. Through this, one would be able to tackle better such essential tasks as natural disasters and risks.

17. Zimbabwe. The conference should review all environmental activities that have taken place since the Stockholm Conference, including the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development and emerging environmental problems such as the ozone layer issue, global warming and transboundary movement of hazardous wastes etc. One of the objectives should be to get the commitment of all countries to co-operate in solving environmental problems.

2. Comments of organisations and programmes
of the United Nations system

(a) United Nations Development Programme

18. The objectives of the conference would be:

(a) To quantify the costs of action and inaction in economic, social and scientific terms;

(b) To identify the sources of financing required for corrective programmes. The size of unmet financing needs for corrective action is so great (many billions of dollars per annum), that significant breakthroughs in at least two areas must be achieved prior to the conference, or debated and as a result, agreements reached at the conference, that is:

(i) The systematic collection of levies on the use of dangerous pollutants (as a minimum, this should include the use of chlorofluorocarbons and fossil fuel);

(ii) The linkages between the environment and the outstanding major economic issues of primary concern to developing countries;

(c) To establish priorities for the environmental issues to be considered as global imperatives, for example:

(i) Global climate change and the manifold implications of developing a range of energy practices;

(ii) A review of present basic food production/storage distribution practices and the food security needs of all nations in the light of potential environmental impact on food production due to climate, pests, to soil and water loss, as well as desertification;

- (iii) Critical poverty and its relation to degradation of the environment and misuse of natural resources;
- (iv) Technologies to mitigate environmental degradation and accelerated realistic plans to apply them;
- (v) Trends in population growth and impact on the environment and rational management of natural resources;
- (vi) Mobilization of popular participation. The conference must give special attention throughout its deliberations to the role of non-governmental organisations and women in addressing environment needs;
- (vii) Co-ordination of inputs with a focus on specific agreements and understandings that are already being considered and a review of institutional arrangements required to promote, manage and monitor environmental and atmospheric programmes.

(b) United Nations Population Fund

19. An attempt should be made to differentiate between progress or interventions that are working and stubborn obstacles. This will help satisfy demands for action-oriented programmes by international agencies and non-governmental organizations, as well as for greater realism about shortcomings, failures and persistent obstacles that require more concentrated policy and programming efforts.

20. The "progress versus obstacle" classification should be applied to developed versus developing countries. This will help shift preoccupations with development and environment from a highly aggregate, global level, to a more disaggregate level, where causes and consequences require different approaches and solutions. For example, rich countries tend to be the source of many polluting technologies, which demands a particular approach. Conversely, poor countries tend to experience environmental degradation owing to poverty and population pressure, which demands a different kind of approach.

21. Within the four-way classification implied above (developed/developing countries, progress/obstacles), an objective of the conference might be to identify further complementarities and non-complementarities in policies bearing on development and environment. An obvious non-complementarity, for example, occurs when national planners pursue economic growth objectives with little attention to environmental costs involved. That applies to both developed and developing countries. Another concerns the impact of structural adjustment in developing countries on the poor, and then subsequent behaviour of poor families as agents of environmental degradation.

22. Equally pervasive, but far more covert and poorly understood, are a host of non-complementary policies involving urban bias in development expenditures, distortionary pricing policies, and so on. An example of how such non-complementarities might have an impact on planning contexts and thus population

variables, is the "special topic", entitled "Distortionary and non-complementary policies", suggested for consideration at the high-level meeting, of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP), to be convened by the World Food Programme in Rome from 3 to 5 July 1989.

23. Similar considerations also set the stage for a more comprehensive treatment and appreciation of population in development and environment. For example, it is important to be clear about the role of population in the context of ultimate factors (for example, polluting technologies), geography (for example, developing countries) and political obstacles (for example, limited progress in the war on poverty). This will help to clarify an agenda concerning how population policies can or cannot ultimately improve the environment. And, at the same time, with greater clarity and honesty about the slow pace of change of ultimate factors, it becomes apparent that population growth (as an exacerbating factor) will take on increasing, indeed, enormous importance over the next 20 years.

24. As for population issues per se, a more focused, realistic assessment of where population interventions can make a difference is suggested. For example, UNFPA is currently emphasizing the role of women in environment to good effect, and there are strong indications that interventions to improve linkages between women, population and environment at the community or local level can be highly effective. This is certainly a subject which should be given priority status at the conference.

25. In addition, it is suggested that the subject of population distribution, migration and refugee problems, including their impact on rapid urbanization, should be awarded special consideration.

(c) Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

26. The Commission supports the idea of holding a conference on environment and development with the following objectives:

(a) To promote initiatives and activities to develop international trade and commerce, which will help to reduce and/or eliminate certain processes of environmental deterioration which threaten the survival of the planet;

(b) To encourage international agreements concerning restrictions on the use of products and technologies that damage the environment;

(c) To establish international agreements and control mechanisms to guard against the deterioration of outer space, the high seas and other areas that are outside the sovereignty of any nation;

(d) To recommend the measures that each country should adopt in order to avoid or reduce the damage to the environment caused by their national development processes;

(e) To encourage regional, subregional and bilateral initiatives which incorporate the environmental dimension into their efforts to achieve joint development.

27. It would be premature to offer a more detailed definition of the content and scope without previously defining the objectives. It would be advisable first clearly to establish the objectives, in light of which more detailed recommendations could be made regarding the content and scope, of a conference.

3. Comments by other organizations

(a) European Economic Community

28. The objectives of the conference should be the following:

(a) To strengthen international co-operation and solidarity in favour of the global environment, between North and South, and East and West;

(b) To adopt legally-binding instruments on global climate change;

(c) To result in plans and projects for concrete action to protect the environment;

(d) To reinforce co-operation within the United Nations system;

(e) To define the environmental priorities for the short and medium term, and the work areas for global and regional co-operation. It is hoped that a draft convention on global climate change, together with a protocol, will already have been prepared, and the conference could be the occasion for its signature by as many participants as possible. One of the other sub-themes of the conference should be environment and development, and the follow-up to General Assembly resolutions 42/186 and 42/187.

(b) Pesticide Action Network International (Pan International)

29. The Network urges UNEP to recommend that the reports listed below be prepared by appropriate organs of the United Nations system as preparatory material for delegates attending the conference. The subject areas embodied in the reports should be part of the meeting's content and should help form the basis for conference recommendations:

(a) A report that examines sustainable agriculture in the context of sustainable development, that is, how sustainable agricultural policy relates to economic, environment, health, food, export and other national policies and vice versa;

(b) A study that monitors ongoing research and development trends in agricultural biotechnology with particular emphasis on potential economic or environmental costs arising from specific product development directions;

(c) A status report on patenting that includes, among other things, a comparison of industrial or utility patents vs. plant breeders rights; a review of the ethical questions involved in patenting life forms and examination of how life form patenting could effect the accessibility of genetic resources for farmers and breeders; and an examination of the patent process as a possible non-tariff barrier to trade;

(d) A group of reports that address the present day and look to a more sustainable future - "State of the world" reports. This group should include reports on the state of the world genetic resources, and on the state of the world traditional agricultural practices and systems: their contribution to sustainable agriculture. Other state of the world reports should be on the following topics: pest management practices, soil conservation/land reclamation practices, irrigation practices/salinization problems, dry-land farming/rain-fed farming, mixed farming; integration of livestock and crop production;

(e) Annual reports of the programme of work of various United Nations agencies in sustainable agriculture including a comparison of expenditures for work in sustainable agriculture versus expenditures for projects focusing on chemical-dependent agriculture. The annual reports could be the basis of 5-, 10-, 15- and 20-year reports, which would monitor progress towards sustainability;

(f) A global study on food irradiation abuses;

(g) An inventory of international trade in hazardous waste, including legal and illegal transfers;

(h) A report that examines programmes of United Nations agencies that work with grass-roots NGOs, as well as with those in consultative status;

(i) A review of the definition of the term "sustainable development" with emphasis on examining how different nations interpret the term, particularly as it relates to agriculture.

30. Pan International developed these recommendations at its international meeting, held from 21 to 24 January 1989 in Penang, Malaysia.

C. Title of the conference

1. Comments by Governments

31. Finland. United Nations Conference on Environment and Development would be an appropriate title for the conference.

32. France. "United Nations Conference on Environment and Development" would be a good title if it were not misunderstood or misinterpreted. Developing countries, in particular, may not condone such a title, which seems to link the development process to the technical and financial assistance given by industrial partners for the protection of the environment. France, therefore, considers that a simpler

title such as "Second United Nations Conference on the Environment", would be preferable. That would preserve the originality and specificity of the exercise, while giving participants the possibility of examining fundamental issues (energy policies, land management, scientific programmes, legal problems).

33. Zimbabwe. "Only One Earth - Let's Preserve It" would be an appropriate title for the conference.

2. Comments by organizations and programmes of the United Nations system

United Nations Development Programme

34. The First Conference on Global Environment Recovery Plan would be an appropriate title for the conference.

3. Comments by other organizations

European Economic Community

35. The United Nations Second Conference on the Human Environment would be an appropriate title for the conference.

III. APPROPRIATE WAYS OF PREPARING FOR THE CONFERENCE

A. At the regional level

1. Comments by Governments

36. France. Because environmental problems are global in scope while often regional in character, accent should be put on co-operation at the regional level. A possible approach to mobilize concerned Governments could be to take greater account of the original character of ecosystems within large geographical areas, as was done in the UNEP regional programmes (Caribbean, West African, Mediterranean) or in the fruitful experiments carried out by the ECE.

37. Poland. The results of the regional conference in Bergen, Norway, will undoubtedly constitute an important contribution to the planned conference.

B. The global intergovernmental preparatory process

1. Comments by Governments

38. Finland. A special body for the preparatory work would appear to be necessary and one possibility would be to establish a committee of the whole under the General Assembly. The Governing Council of UNEP, as an open-ended body, would also be a possibility. In any event, a separate secretariat is obviously needed.

39. Besides the general framework of the conference, described in General Assembly resolution 43/196, the background document prepared by UNEP for the consultations held at the ministerial level in Nairobi in January 1989, and certain general conclusions reached at that meeting, could greatly facilitate the preparatory work. That is true especially regarding the priorities of the global environmental problems.

40. France. The UNEP Governing Council should have the main responsibility for the preparations for the conference. A preparatory committee could be composed of members of the Governing Council, while remaining open to the participation of States that wish to participate therein, and of United Nations bodies concerned with the environment, in accordance with the spirit of the system-wide medium-term environment programme for the period 1990-1995.

41. Poland. Considering the global nature of the conference, preparatory work ought to be preceded by active multidirectional efforts on the national, regional and global scale. It would be purposeful to work out uniform guidelines for the major objectives of the conference (conceptual and substantive matters) using the plan of preparations for the regional conference whose theme will be "Action for our common future", to be held in Bergen, Norway, in 1990. A preparatory committee with limited participation, involving the United Nations agencies concerned and regional commissions, might be formed. The consultative meetings of the participants of the fifteenth session of the Governing Council of UNEP might be the proper forum in which to work out preliminary organizational arrangements, the concept of the conference and its procedures.

2. Comments by organizations of the United Nations system

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

42. The content of the conference should be based on the inputs presented by preparatory conferences at both the regional and global levels, at both of which the content should be prepared on the basis of the stipulated objectives.

3. Comments by other organizations

(a) European Economic Community

43. All participants should take part in a preliminary stock-taking exercise, in which each one would outline its environmental policies, successes and failures since 1972, and would provide a brief report on the state of its environment in 1991, so that the Secretariat could produce a world-wide bird's-eye view document on our global environment.

(b) Pesticide Action Network International

44. A joint technical preparatory conference on sustainable agriculture should be convened by UNEP and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in preparation for the conference with a view to developing a comprehensive report with detailed recommendations for submission to the conference.

C. Non-governmental organizations

1. Comments by Governments

45. France. The scientific community (International Council of Scientific Unions) and concerned non-governmental organizations (International Union for the Conservation of Nature) could be consulted during the preparatory process.

46. Poland. An important role in the preparations would be played by co-operation with non-governmental ecological movements but with respect to specific environmental projects, particularly in order to draw the attention of public opinion.

D. Secretariat of the conference

1. Comments by Governments

47. France. The mandate given UNEP by the General Assembly in 1972 also justifies that the secretariat of the preparatory committee be supported by the United Nations Secretariat, assisted by the UNEP secretariat.

IV. SUITABLE TIME AND PLACE AND OTHER MODALITIES

A. Time

1. Comments by Governments

48. Finland. The conference should take place in June 1992 in commemoration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, held in Stockholm in 1972.

49. France. 1992 would be an appropriate year, and the month of May or June would be a symbolic celebration of the twentieth anniversary of Stockholm. France has no problem, in principle with an earlier date. The year 1990, however, would not seem appropriate in view of the other international meetings already scheduled for that year (a special session of the General Assembly and the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries).

50. Poland. The conference might be held during the first quarter of 1992 so that the session of the UNEP Governing Council could be used as the platform for working out follow-up activities.

B. Place

1. Comments by Governments

51. Finland. The question of the host of the conference should be solved, through informal negotiations between the countries concerned, before the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly. Finland would be ready to support Sweden as the host if that is the general wish. Finland would, nevertheless, be ready to accept either Brazil or Canada as host.

52. France. A United Nations centre would be favourably considered, but France is open to any proposal.

53. Poland. As the initiative for the first United Nations Conference on the Human Environment originated in Sweden, Poland would be in favour of Sweden serving as host again in 1992.

54. Senegal. The conference should be held at Geneva during the spring or summer of 1992.

55. Zimbabwe. The conference should be held at UNEP headquarters in Nairobi or in Norway or Canada, although there may be problems of distance for some member countries.

C. Other modalities

1. Comments by Governments

56. Finland. In view of the important nature of the conference, it should be held at high political level. The national delegations to the meetings of the preparatory body, as well as to the conference itself, should consist of senior representatives of organizations and institutions relevant to the broad scope of the conference, that is, not only the ministries of foreign affairs or of the environment, but also other relevant ministries (of finance, energy, trade, industry etc.) trade unions and industrial organizations.

57. France. The conference should be open to all States and, in view of its global character, should be held at the ministerial level. Those responsible for environmental matters in intergovernmental organizations (specialized agencies, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, World Bank) should also be invited.

58. The General Assembly, in the resolution to be adopted on the financial arrangements, should invite the Secretary-General to charge the required expenses against the regular budget of the United Nations (sect. 29 (Conference and library services) of the programme budget) and should request Member States to provide voluntary contributions. States could also provide contributions in kind (secondment of experts, hosting regional preparatory meetings).

2. Comments by organisations and programmes of the
United Nations system

United Nations Development Programme

59. Attendance should focus on decision makers from ministries/departments dealing with planning, finance, natural resources and the environment. A smaller and more manageable audience than participated in the Stockholm Conference could be beneficial to the decision-making process and, since interest in attendance is likely to be unprecedented, it would appear that some restrictions might be inevitable. Although NGO participation in the conference is deemed essential, the idea could be explored of a parallel NGO meeting, such as the one that was organized at the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace held at Nairobi in July 1985. 3/

Notes

1/ The annual report of the Commission on Human Settlements to the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session will be issued as Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 8 (A/44/8).

2/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-second Session, Supplement No. 25 (A/42/25 and Corr.1), annex II.

3/ For the report of the World Conference, see A/CONF.116/28/Rev.1 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IV.10).
