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## UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

### Report of the Secretary-General

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## 1. Introduction

1. This report on the progress of the preparatory work for the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment is submitted in accordance with paragraph 5 of General Assembly resolution 2657 (XXV).

2. Since the General Assembly last considered the preparations for the Conference, the Preparatory Committee has held its second and third sessions - in Geneva, from 8 to 19 February and in New York, from 13 to 24 September 1971. The reports on these sessions are available to participants in the current session of the General Assembly. 1/ The preparations for the Conference were also the subject of discussion at the fifty-first session of the Economic and Social Council, as requested by the Assembly in paragraph 4 of resolution 2657 (XXV). The Council took note with appreciation of the report of the Preparatory Committee on its second session and in the light of the importance of the subject, decided to transmit to the General Assembly and to the Preparatory Committee at its third session the summary records of the discussion of the item in its Co-ordinating Committee. 2/

## 2. Provisional agenda for the Conference

3. At its second session, the Preparatory Committee discussed the content of the agenda for the Conference. Agreement was reached on a proposed Conference agenda and a list of annotations to the main substantive items. On the basis of the recommendations of the Preparatory Committee, a draft provisional agenda for the Conference has been formulated for consideration by the General Assembly (see the annex).

## 3. Conference documentation

### (a) Sources

4. Up to the end of October, national reports were formally received from 67 countries. Advance copies from two countries as well as "country monographs", prepared for the Prague Symposium on Problems relating to the Environment (Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)) by two European countries which did not submit national reports for the Stockholm Conference were also analysed. In addition to the above 71 reports, eight others are in preparation.

5. All basic papers from United Nations agencies and bodies have been received, 71 in all. Basic papers were received from Governments and non-United Nations intergovernmental organizations. The non-governmental organizations contributed 39 such papers.

6. The report of the ECE Symposium, which was held in Prague from 3 to 10 May 1971 (E/ECE/ENV/4), and the documents submitted to it have been included in the basic

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1/ A/CONF.48/PC.9 and A/CONF.48/PC.13.

2/ See E/AC.24/SR.412-416. For the relevant part of the report of the Council, see Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 3 (A/8403), chapter XI, paras. 344-355.

documentation for the Conference. It should be noted that the report is being printed and will be made available to all Governments in the official languages of ECE - English, French and Russian.

7. Thirty-two case studies were received from 12 Governments, three intergovernmental organizations and 12 non-governmental organizations. Additional case studies to illustrate proposals for specific action were requested from a number of other Governments. They were to reach the Secretariat by 15 November.

(b) Conference library

8. All the documentation will be placed in the Conference library. It is hoped that ways and means will be found to publish, after the Conference, a part of the documentation, which already amounts to more than 7,000 pages.

(c) Official documentation for the Conference

9. As reported to the General Assembly at its twentieth session, the official documentation for the Conference was not to exceed 1,600 pages, whereas original estimates were in the region of 6,500 pages. 3/ With a view to further responding to Governments' wishes to reduce the volume of documentation and to present to the Conference only those documents that are essential to decision-making, the Conference secretariat is endeavouring to limit the official documentation to a maximum of 900 pages.

10. The official documentation will include a comprehensive action plan, 6 papers corresponding to the 6 major subject areas, as listed in the draft provisional agenda (see annex I), the draft Declaration on the Environment, a report on the United Nations system and the human environment prepared by the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination, possible draft conventions on ocean dumping and conservation, a bibliography and the necessary procedural documents (rules of procedure, information for participants, etc.).

11. The source material listed in paragraphs 5 to 7 above were fully drawn upon by the Conference secretariat in drafting the official Conference documentation. Provisional drafts have been submitted to the critical appraisal of a group of individual experts drawn from Governments and from the United Nations system. Following the discussion in the Preparatory Committee at its third session, the Secretary-General of the Conference invited all members of the Preparatory Committee to nominate experts to consult further with him on the drafts before they are finalized, before the end of the year.

12. The preparation of the official Conference documentation is proceeding according to schedule and all documents will be available in the five official languages to all Governments in February 1972 as planned.

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3/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-fifth Session, Annexes, agenda item 43, document A/8065/Add.1, para. 8 (d).

#### 4. Declaration on the Human Environment

13. At its second session the Preparatory Committee established an intergovernmental working group to prepare a draft Declaration on the Human Environment. The group held an organizational session from 15 to 17 March and a substantive session from 10 to 21 May 1971, both in New York (see A/CONF.48/PC.12). The group is composed of the members of the Preparatory Committee; other States Members of the United Nations may participate as observers.

14. The working group decided to forward to the Preparatory Committee, for its further consideration, a draft of a preamble and fundamental principles for the draft Declaration, subject to reservations and observations on the draft expressed by members of the group. The report of the group was considered by the Preparatory Committee at its third session, at which it was recommended that the group should continue its work and meet again in New York, from 5 to 14 January 1972, to develop further the draft preamble and fundamental principles. The work of the group will be based on, but not confined to, the draft prepared at its first substantive session, and will take into account the views expressed at the third session of the Preparatory Committee, the discussions on the subject in the General Assembly and any pertinent decision taken at the current session. It is the hope of the secretariat that the working group, at its second session, will be able to present a final draft for consideration by the Preparatory Committee at its fourth session.

#### 5. Other intergovernmental working groups

15. As a result of recommendations made by the Preparatory Committee at its second session, four other intergovernmental working groups were established: the group on marine pollution 4/ met in London from 14 to 18 June and in Ottawa from 8 to 12 November 1971; the group on soils 5/ met in Rome from 21 to 25 June; the group on monitoring or surveillance 6/ met in Geneva from 16 to 20 August; and the group on conservation 7/ met in New York from 14 to 17 September. The reports of these groups were made available to all member Governments. The report on the second session of the group on marine pollution is under preparation.

16. The intergovernmental working group on monitoring recommended that Governments should be consulted on the possibility of that group holding a second session. The secretariat expects to be able to report orally to the General Assembly on this question.

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- 4/ For the report on the first session of the group, see A/CONF.48/IWGM/1/5.
  - 5/ For the report on the first session of the group, see A/CONF.48/IWGS/1/24.
  - 6/ For the report on the first session of the group, see A/CONF.48/IWGM/1/3.
  - 7/ For the report on the first session of the group, see A/CONF.48/IWGC/1/11.

## 6. Regional meetings on development and environment

17. A number of seminars have been organized for the purpose of facilitating the participation of developing countries in the preparatory process for the Conference and in the Conference itself. The first of these was a panel of experts on development and environment, convened by the Secretary-General of the Conference at Founex, Switzerland, from 4 to 12 June 1971. The report of this panel was the basic document considered by a series of regional seminars on development and environment, organized by the United Nations regional economic commissions and the United Nations Economic and Social Office in Beirut in co-operation with the Conference secretariat. The four seminars were attended by 77 developing countries. The reports of the seminars are being circulated to Governments. The dates of the seminars were as follows: ECAFE - Bangkok, from 13 to 23 August 1971; 8/ ECA - Addis Ababa, from 23 to 28 August 1971; ECLA - Mexico City, from 6 to 11 September 1971; 9/ United Nations Economic and Social Office in Beirut - Beirut, from 27 September to 20 October 1971.

18. A meeting of scientists from developing countries was also convened in Canberra by the Special Committee on Problems of the Environment of the International Council of Scientific Unions, with the support of the Conference secretariat and in co-operation with the United Nations Office for Science and Technology.

19. It should be noted that regional preparations for the Conference also included the Symposium on Problems relating to Environment. The four commissions were represented at the third session of the Preparatory Committee, during which a number of informal regional consultations took place.

20. Extra-budgetary resources were contributed by a number of countries to a financial pool administered by the secretariat; these additional funds made it possible to convene the panel of experts on development and environment and the four regional seminars. They also covered the cost of participation of developing countries in various meetings, an exploratory mission to 15 African countries, in co-operation with the ECA secretariat, and enabled the secretariat to meet requests from a number of developing countries for consultant services for the preparation of their national reports.

## 7. Draft rules of procedure for the Conference

21. At its third session, the Preparatory Committee considered the draft rules of procedure for the Conference. A general consensus was reached on the draft contained in annex IV to the report of the Preparatory Committee on that session. An account of the discussion on the draft rules is contained in chapter X.B of that report. The Preparatory Committee recommended that the draft rules of procedure contained in annex IV to the Committee's report should be approved by the General Assembly at its twenty-sixth session. 10/

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8/ For the report of the group, see E/CM.11/999.

9/ For the report of the group, see ST/ECLA/CONF.40/L.5.

10/ A/CONF.48/PC.13, para. 200.

8. Participation in the Conference by non-United Nations intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations

22. Also at its third session, the Preparatory Committee agreed that all non-United Nations intergovernmental organizations which had previously been invited to send observers to other United Nations conferences or which had established a formal relationship with other United Nations organs, could be invited to be represented by observers at the Conference 11/ should they express their interest.

23. The Preparatory Committee agreed by consensus on the criteria for participation in the Conference by non-governmental organizations. These criteria provide for the invitation of non-governmental organizations of a genuinely international character which are directly concerned with the subject matter of the Conference and which can contribute to the achievement of its objectives. They also provide for the classification of non-governmental organizations according to their interest in the different subject areas to be considered by the Conference. 12/

9. Fourth session of the Preparatory Committee

24. The Preparatory Committee has recommended that its fourth session should be held in New York, from 6 to 17 March 1972. 13/

10. Follow-up to the Conference

25. During the time between the Conference, in June, and the twenty-seventh session of the General Assembly, a considerable amount of follow-up work will be necessary. Pending the decisions of the Assembly on the recommendations of the Conference and in particular on future organizational arrangements within the Secretariat, it would appear desirable to make provision, until the end of 1972, for the continuation of an adequate staff. The financial implications of such a proposal, together with a revised budget for 1972 reflecting other changes, will be set forth in an addendum to the present report.

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11/ Ibid., para. 203.

12/ A/CONF.48/PC.11, paras. 244 and 247; and A/CONF.48/PC.13 para. 173.

13/ A/CONF.48/PC.13, para. 10.

ANNEX

Draft provisional agenda

1. Opening of the Conference.
2. Election of the President.
3. Adoption of the rules of procedure.
4. Constitution of committees.
5. Election of the officers other than the President.
6. Credentials of representatives to the Conference:
  - (a) Appointment of the Credentials Committee;
  - (b) Report of the Credentials Committee.
7. Adoption of the agenda.
8. General debate.
9. Declaration on the Human Environment.
10. The planning and management of human settlements for environmental quality (subject area I).
11. The environmental aspects of natural resources management (subject area II).
12. Identification and control of pollutants of broad international significance (subject area III).
13. Educational, informational, social and cultural aspects of environmental issues (subject area IV).
14. Development and environment (subject area V).
15. The international organizational implications of action proposals (subject area VI).
16. Adoption of plan of action.
17. Adoption of the report of the Conference.

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