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PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE UNITED
NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE HUMAN
ENVIRONMENT
First session
10-20 March 1970

REPORT OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE UNITED
NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

CONTENTS

| | <u>Paragraphs</u> |
|---|-------------------|
| I. ORGANIZATION OF THE FIRST SESSION | 1 - 13 |
| Attendance | 2 - 3 |
| Documentation | 4 |
| Opening of session and election of Chairman | 5 |
| Rules of procedure | 6 - 8 |
| Summary records | 9 |
| Election of officers | 10 |
| Agenda | 11 |
| Report of the Secretary-General on the preparatory work required for the Conference | 12 |
| Organization of work | 13 |
| II. CONSIDERATION OF THE PROGRAMME CONTENT OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT AND THE PREPARATORY WORK | 14 - 54 |
| Further definition of the programme content and selection of topics for the Conference | 14 - 27 |
| Recommendations | 27 |
| Organizational structure of the Conference | 28 - 30 |

CONTENTS (continued)

| | <u>Paragraphs</u> |
|--|-------------------|
| Documentation for the Conference | 31 - 41 |
| Recommendations | 35 |
| Measures to encourage national participation | 42 - 45 |
| Public information | 46 - 52 |
| Organization of the secretariat and consultation with United Nations agencies and other organizations | 53 - 55 |
| III. OTHER BUSINESS | 56 - 57 |
| Second session of the Preparatory Committee | 56 - 57 |

ANNEXES

- I. Agenda
- II. List of participants
- III. List of documents submitted to the Preparatory Committee
at its first session
- IV. Statement by the Secretary-General opening the first session
of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations
Conference on the Human Environment

REPORT OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE UNITED NATIONS
CONFERENCE ON THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

I. ORGANIZATION OF THE FIRST SESSION

1. The first session of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (established under General Assembly resolution 2581 (XXIV)) was held at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 10 to 20 March 1970.

Attendance

2. The session was attended by representatives of all States members of the Preparatory Committee, by observers from twenty States not members of the Committee and by observers of specialized agencies and of other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. A full list of those attending is given in annex II.

3. The Preparatory Committee noted with great satisfaction the intense interest in the Conference, and on the subject of environment as a whole, shown by many intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. It looked forward to their active co-operation in the preparatory work.

Documentation

4. The documents before the Preparatory Committee at its first session are listed in annex III.

Opening of session and election of Chairman

5. The session was opened by the Secretary-General, whose statement is given in annex IV. The Committee then unanimously elected Mr. Keith Johnson (Jamaica) as Chairman.

Rules of procedure

6. The Committee decided, on the basis of rule 162 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, to be guided in the conduct of its business by the general principle that the rules of procedure of the General Assembly should apply to the Committee in so far as they were appropriate for the performance of its functions. The Committee decided to amend rule 105, which provides for one Chairman, one Vice-Chairman and one Rapporteur, so as to ensure broader geographical distribution of States members of the Committee by providing for the election of three Vice-Chairmen instead of one, as well as a Rapporteur.

7. The Committee agreed that it would make every effort to reach all decisions by way of consensus, but that in the absence of consensus decision should be reached by a vote, as provided for in the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

8. The Committee noted that the General Assembly, in resolution 2581 (XXIV), had invited the specialized agencies, the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Advisory Committee on the Application of Science and Technology to Development to collaborate closely with the Secretary-General in the preparations for the Conference and to assist, as appropriate, in the work of the Preparatory Committee. In addition, the General Assembly, after adopting resolution 2581 (XXIV) had decided "... that any interested Member State not appointed to the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment may designate highly qualified representatives to act as accredited observers at sessions of the Committee, with the right to participate in its discussions".

Summary records

9. On the basis of General Assembly resolution 2538 (XXIV), paragraph 10, it was decided that the Preparatory Committee would not have summary records.

Election of officers

10. The Committee elected the following officers:

Vice-Chairmen: Mr. Fereydoun Hoveyda (Iran)
Mr. Rastislav Lacko (Czechoslovakia)
Mr. Vernon Johnson Mwaanga (Zambia)
Rapporteur: Mr. Börje Billner (Sweden)

Agenda

11. The Committee adopted the agenda (see annex I) at its opening meeting.

Report of the Secretary-General on the preparatory work required for the Conference

12. The representative of the Secretary-General introduced the various documents prepared for the first session and gave a brief outline of the functions to be performed by the Committee. He also reviewed the preparatory work up to the time of the first session, particularly the preparation of the Secretary-General's report entitled "Problems of the human environment" (E/4667), and acknowledged the important contributions made to the preparation of that report by many Governments, by organizations of the United Nations and by various intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

Organization of work

13. To facilitate its work, the Preparatory Committee established three ad hoc working groups as follows:

Working Group I

Further definition of the programme content and selection of topics

Chairman: Mr. G.C. Butler (Canada)

Working Group II

Questions relating to a possible declaration on the human environment

Chairman: Mr. N.N. Jha (India)

Working Group III

Preparation of national reports

Chairman: Mrs. Neoma de Castañeda (Mexico)

It was agreed that the chairmen of the working groups would also act as rapporteurs. The recommendations of the working groups, as approved by the Preparatory Committee, appear in the relevant sections of the report.

II. CONSIDERATION OF THE PROGRAMME CONTENT FOR THE UNITED NATIONS
CONFERENCE ON THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT AND THE PREPARATORY WORK

Further definition of the programme content and selection of
topics for the Conference

14. The general debate on item 6 was based on the considerations contained in the Secretary-General's report (E/4667), particularly in paragraphs 82 to 121, and on document A/CONF.43/PC/2 relating to certain aspects of the report. The representative of the Secretary-General pointed out in his introductory statement that, with regard to the programme content of the Conference, the wish of the General Assembly to concentrate on international problems had been interpreted widely - while the number of environmental problems which are international by nature (for example, the oceans) is comparatively small, those which are international in the sense of being of international concern (for example, the unwise use of resources), or in the sense that the attack on these problems can be greatly facilitated by concerted international action or exchange of experience and information (for example, urbanization of land-use planning), form the bulk of the problems of major concern at the present time.

15. In the context of this agenda item, it was agreed that the main task of the Preparatory Committee would be to assist the Secretary-General in the selection - on the basis of the views of Governments - of topics and headings for the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, as well as in the formulation of ideas, suggestions and proposals with regard to the programme content for the Conference.

16. The debate showed a large degree of consensus on the characteristics and seriousness of environmental problems in different countries and on the general conception and objectives of the 1972 Conference. At the same time, the great diversity and complexity of the problems of the human environment, in various countries as well as in various regions, was stressed. These problems had to be considered in relation to technological, geographical, economic, social, cultural and other factors.

17. As regards the general scope of subjects to be covered by the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, the debate emphasized the fact that questions of environmental pollution were of vital importance, but that other matters, such as urban and rural planning, conservation of nature, and proper management of natural resources, were also important. It was recognized that an appropriate balance should be attained, in the range of subjects to be considered by the Conference, between the environmental problems of the developed and those of the developing areas of the world. One important result of the Conference should be to help developing countries to avoid the undesirable side-effects of industrialization. Preventive measures were to be preferred to curative ones. At the same time, it would have to be clear that management of the environment must not retard the development process or the maximum rational use of natural resources. Continuing economic progress must be ensured, while minimizing environmental degradation and pollution.

18. Particular emphasis was placed on the link between environmental control and economic and social development, and on the fact that while there remained many technological questions to be solved, problems of the human environment were increasingly of a socio-economic nature. Thus the need for "new economic thinking, new legal instruments, new administrative measures and new governmental priorities", stressed by the Secretary-General in his opening address, was generally recognized by the Committee. The Conference should be a focal point of present efforts as well as a starting-point for future action in the environmental field.

19. It was also felt that more attention should be given to the socio-cultural aspects of the problems of the human environment in order to appraise in its totality man's relation to his environment. At the same time the difficulties of a world-wide approach in this field were recognized.

20. It was furthermore emphasized that no comprehensive action related to environmental change could ignore the effects of constantly growing population and its tendency to concentrate in large urban areas. The problems of the working environment and of urban transportation were stressed in that respect. The Conference should consider by what ways and means developing countries might be assisted in their efforts to cope with their environmental problems. It was the consensus of the meeting that the problems to be considered by the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment should be of such a character that their solution would require, or would be greatly facilitated by, international co-operation. That was not to be taken that the Conference programme should be limited to global or regional problems only. There was a clear need for international action with respect to many areas where solutions depended primarily on measures that had to be taken at the national and local levels - for example, problems of urban growth, soil conservation, administrative methods for the national use and management of natural resources etc. In those fields, countries would be assisted by the international exchange of knowledge and experience. In that connexion some participants suggested the establishment of international information centres.

21. It was generally agreed that national reports would be of great value both as a means of collecting information for the Conference and of helping the countries to assess their own situation.

22. It was furthermore the consensus of the meeting that the Conference should be action-oriented. It should encourage and provide guiding principles for action by Governments and international organizations. It should therefore concentrate on those areas where such action appeared practical, feasible and urgent. At the same time, the Conference should not lose sight of problems of a more long-term nature. It was stressed in that connexion that much technological knowledge was already available, but not sufficiently used, and that the Conference should aim at ensuring acknowledgement by the political leaders in all countries of that need for action.

23. Several delegations indicated that the action might well take the form of international agreements and conventions, which could be put into final form at the Conference or identified for further preparation. It was also generally recognized that an international declaration on the human environment should be prepared for possible adoption by the Conference.

24. Particular emphasis was placed during the debate on the ways and means of taking action at the local, national and regional levels. The importance of thorough exchanges of views and experience at the Conference among those responsible in each country for planning, management and control policies relating to the problems of the human environment was emphasized as a major objective. It was noted in that respect that the question of governmental and administrative structures to deal with environmental management from an over-all point of view in each country should receive special attention.

25. The importance was stressed, in connexion with the problem of action for environmental management, of exchanging information about environmental problems and for data collection and systematic monitoring of certain environmental parameters which should be established on a global basis. The need for further scientific research on all environmental problems was also mentioned, including those problems where partial technological solutions had already been found. The particular need for economic and social research in relation to environmental preservation was also stressed. Some of the delegates referred to the need for proper environmental education at all levels and ages.

26. The representatives of the United Nations and of the specialized agencies reminded the Preparatory Committee of some of their activities related to the subject of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, a brief summary of which had been given as an annex to document E/4667. It was the firm view of the Preparatory Committee that repetition or duplication of effort in dealing with technical environmental matters should be avoided. The 1972 Conference should make full use of work already going on or being planned in the various international organizations concerned. These activities could be taken account of in the preparations for the 1972 Conference in a way which would give them additional support, fresh impetus, common outlook and direction. This applied, for instance, to the atmospheric monitoring programmes of WMO, to the Man and Biosphere Programme of UNESCO, to certain aspects of the FAO Indicative World Plan, or to specific international agreements being prepared by other United Nations agencies, such as the ILO, WHO or IMCO. As regards the meeting of ECE on the environment, to be held in Prague in 1971, it was recognized by the Committee that the methods of preparation and the results of that meeting could be of great value for the 1972 world-wide United Nations Conference on the Human Environment.

Recommendations

27. Following the general debate on agenda item 6, the Preparatory Committee adopted the recommendations contained in the reports of working groups I and II, which were the following:

I. Further definition of the programme content and selection of topics

(1) After studying the proposals contained in document E/4667 (paras. 113-116) the Working Group recommended the division of the subject matter of the Conference into the three following areas:

- (a) Environmental aspects of human settlements;
- (b) Rational management of natural resources;
- (c) Environmental degradation from pollution and nuisances;

and established the following outlines and recommendations for action.

A. Environmental aspects of human settlements

1. Demographic and settlement trends

(2) Under this heading the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment would review questions related to environmental problems arising from population growth and distribution, and from policies and programmes which have a bearing on the settlement process. The subject could be subdivided as follows:

(a) Analysis of demographic trends, including the urbanization process and changes in the balance of population between rural and urban areas, resulting trends in rural and urban settlement and the location of industry; their effects on the human environment;

(b) Review of trends in the geographical distribution of population, including migrations, in order to identify policies and strategies for rural and urban development which are conducive to economic growth and social improvement and are compatible with satisfactory levels of environmental quality.

2. Problems of human settlements (in their physical, biological and cultural framework)

(3) (a) A comprehensive analysis and review of the urban and rural environment, present trends, problems, causes and effects, concerning cities and settlements of different sizes and socio-economic patterns;

(b) Review and analysis of specific problems, such as:

(i) Effects of pollution of air, water, soil, as well as noise and vibration on the health and living and working conditions of rural and urban populations;

(ii) Water supply and waste disposal;

(iii) Land use and related aspects of traffic and transportation;

(iv) Housing, slum clearance, urban renewal and community facilities;

(v) Frontiers of settlements and the impact of agricultural, pastoral and forestry activities on the environment;

(vi) Commercial collecting, hunting and fishing activities and their impact on the environment;

(vii) Environmental deterioration through mining and industrial enclaves and over-concentration of industry;

(c) Studies of the total effects of environmental changes on man, such as:

(i) "Man-made" diseases; creation of situations in which such diseases are difficult to control;

- (ii) Undesirable influences of these elements and new substances on biochemical mechanisms;
- (iii) Genetic effects;
- (iv) Effects of the absence of natural stimuli;
- (v) Preservation of optimal socio-cultural patterns.

B. Rational management of natural resources

1. Introduction

(4) The original title of the subject read "Rational use and development of natural resources" and was later expanded to include the question of conservation. Rather than maintaining the usual dichotomy associated with natural resources - that is, the development of the resource base vis-à-vis conservation of the resource base - it was thought preferable to speak of the "rational management of natural resources". Implicit in the term "rational management" is the concept of "managed-use" of the resource base and, secondly, the conservation of the resource base.

(5) Although it was recognized that environmental pollution is a special subject area, it was necessary to include in this review the question of regulatory control of the environment through natural resource legislation. Although it may seem somewhat anomalous to include environmental legislation in a policy designed to encourage the utilization of natural resources, it is believed the two are inextricably bound together. Because it is recognized that human intervention results in constant change to the total natural environment, the Working Group has expanded the phrase "environmental pollution" to read "environmental degradation". It then includes things such as land damage due to thermal erosion or thermal karst, or the loss of wildlife habitat through altering watershed patterns and removing vegetative cover. These considerations include due attention to minimizing disturbance to the natural environment in the study, survey, design and planning of utilization of natural resources. This is particularly true in the case of developing countries entering the phase of rapid industrialization and development.

(6) There are many methods of treating the subject "The rational management of the natural resources", for purposes of conference preparations. But each of the six choices listed at the end of this section had certain limitations. The Working Group feel that many of the current problems in the field of natural resources are due to the limited single-sector approach adopted by many managers and administrators. In order to achieve the desirable objective of integrated management, the Working Group feels it will be necessary to adopt a multidisciplinary "management approach" to the problem.

2. The management approach

(7) It is recommended that for the portion of the 1972 Conference dealing with the question of natural resources, the subject be dealt with in the following way. Against a background consideration of: an inventory of the resource base; a projection of demand on the resource base; and the effect on the total environment of utilizing the resource base in meeting the future demand, several major headings were defined as follows:

(a) Resource management structures

Comparative studies on international and national structures, in different socio-cultural and economic systems and stages of economic development, for different types of resources and resource work stages;

(b) Resource management organization requirements:

- (i) Manpower, training facilities;
- (ii) Scientific and technological research and application;
- (iii) National technical services and institution-building;
- (iv) Financial requirements and prospects;
- (v) Legal and administrative framework;
- (vi) International co-operation;

(c) Resource management problems (with emphasis on those needing guide-posts in relation to environmental aspects):

- (i) Selected technical problems and techniques (including effects of technological revolution on resource development and utilization - for example, desalination of waters);
- (ii) Economic problems (including effect of environmental actions on demand and supply of natural resource products and resources, and on development opportunities for developing countries and frontier regions, need for new economic concepts to compute cost of environmental degradation and its modification etc.);
- (iii) Administrative and legal problems;

(d) Policy formulation based on adequate data collection, with a view to harmonizing development and conservation;

(e) Long-term natural resources in relation to environment prospects;

(f) Resource data and document storage and retrieval systems.

3. Illustrative list of topics for background papers and case studies*

(8) (a) Survey of future manpower needs, availability and requirements for training facilities;

(b) The problems arising from recent technology - for example, in transmission and transportation;

* Similar lists may be requested for subject areas (8) (a) and (b).

(c) The external diseconomies resulting from regulatory control of the environment in developing countries;

(d) Quantifying the costs and benefits, both social and economic, resulting from economic growth while maintaining and improving the quality of the environment;

(e) The effect of environmental legislation on the demand and supply of natural resources and on the development opportunities within developing countries;

(f) Man-made environmental value:

(i) National parks - recreation and aesthetic value;

(ii) Protection of historic sites and monuments;

(g) Natural environmental value:

Loss as a result of the extinction of plants and wildlife;

(h) Cost of restoration and reclamation of surface lands; cost of restoration of water quality in fresh-water systems;

(i) Preliminary survey on the advantages and problems, ecologically and economically, of the implementation of recycling of waste materials;

(j) A study of the possibilities of increasing the information and education of staff on all levels and, concomitantly, a case study on information and education centres in developing countries with respect to natural resources management;

(k) The impact on the environment of utilization of the resource base, including agricultural and pastoral activities, in frontier and sparsely populated areas;

(l) The impact of resource-based industry upon people living in a frontier area whose traditional livelihood has been gained from living off the land;

(m) Irreversible damage to the environment produced by inadequate ecological studies prior to the application of technology;

4. Alternate approaches to studying the subject

(9) (a) By type of natural resource - such as soil and agricultural land, forests, fisheries, flora, fauna, protists, water, mineral, energy resources etc.;

(b) Local, national, regional, international, global;

(c) By type of physical environment - atmosphere, hydrosphere, geosphere;

(d) By climatic and geomorphic areas;

(e) Renewable and non-renewable resources;

(f) Stages in industrial utilization of the resource base - that is, research, exploration, evaluation, pilot project, development, utilization, reclamation and restoration.

C. Environmental degradation from pollution and nuisances

(10) The following paragraphs outline the suggested approach to the question of environmental pollution at the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment.

1. Definition

(11) Need for some generally accepted definition of pollution as a framework within which the various media, pollutants and sources could be examined.

2. Pollutants

(12) Their sources, characteristics, media and effects (both long- and short-term) on plants and animals, including man. Possible classifications are:

(a) Sources:

- (i) Industrial;
- (ii) Agricultural;
- (iii) Urban and other human activities;
- (iv) Natural causes;
- (v) Resource development;
- (vi) Transportation;

(b) Types:

- (i) Physical (including noise and radiations from all sources);
- (ii) Chemical;
- (iii) Biological;

(c) Media:

Air, fresh water, the seas, soil.

3. Criteria and standards

(13) (a) Study of existing national and international standards for establishing limits for chemical, physical and biological contaminants and other quantifiable effects injurious to health or the environment. The compilation could form the basis of international standards for consideration for acceptance by all member countries of the Conference.

- (b) Establishment of criteria and standards where these do not yet exist;
- (c) Identification of areas requiring research leading to criteria;
- (d) Application of standards.

4. National, regional and international environmental monitoring systems

(14) (a) Consideration should be given to the progressive co-ordination of existing or planned national, regional and international monitoring programmes involving compilation, evaluation and dissemination of data, including:

- (i) Improvement of national, regional and international systems;
 - (ii) Identification of substances to be monitored;
 - (iii) Internationally accepted methods of measuring changes in the environment;
- (b) Consideration should be given to the roles of:
- (i) National systems and their participation in international networks;
 - (ii) Data management (acquisition, storage and communication);
 - (iii) International organizations.

5. Relation of pollution management to the human environment as a whole

(15) Necessity for multidisciplinary studies prior to the Conference on the effects of pollution, and of preventive and corrective measures, upon the entire ecological system in which human society exists.

6. Economic and social causes and implications

(16) Economic and social causes and implications of pollution prevention and correction:

- (a) Effects of pollution control costs on relative competitive positions among countries with similar industries;
- (b) Special problems of pollution costs affecting economic growth in developing countries;
- (c) Domestic, legal and administrative aspects;
- (d) Possible case studies;
- (e) Cost-benefit studies of anti-pollution measures.

Recommendations for action

(17) In addition to the above outlines of subject matter the Working Group also prepared lists of national and international activities which seemed appropriate for the Conference to consider.

(18) One activity identified as being basic to any programme was that of education and training in all aspects of environmental problems.

(19) Lists of recommended actions are presented below. In considering them, however, it should be borne in mind that the division of the Conference subject into the three areas listed above is sometimes artificial and that it is essential to consider the problems of the human environment as a whole from different points of view.

(20) Further, the problems of the human environment are multidimensional and characterized by complex interactions between the various parts of ecological systems, as well as between these systems and human activities. It is necessary to recognize in any one of the three subject areas problems and approaches such as:

(a) The preservation and development of cultural, aesthetic and scientific values of human environments;

(b) The understanding and control of unintentional influences on climates resulting from various activities such as air pollution, land management, urbanization etc.;

(c) The forecasting of and the control of the effects of catastrophic alterations of the environment resulting from earthquakes, floods etc.;

(d) Long-term forecasting studies of trends and developments and of their interaction, including certain technological forecasting studies;

(e) Development of early-warning systems for environmental deterioration;

(f) Systems analysis and operational research methods, planning, programming, management and decision-making techniques, systematic analysis of goals and objectives in this field, of their interdependence and their compatibility.

(21) It follows that in any approach to environmental problems, it is necessary to employ a strategic assessment which takes full account not only of effects on the environment, but also of financial, fiscal, administrative, legislative, social, economic, scientific and technological factors.

(22) No recommended action should be planned or implemented in a fragmentary isolated way, but rather integrated into a co-ordinated effort, based on over-all views of problems and priorities.

Recommendations for national action to be considered by the Conference

A. Environmental aspects of human settlements

(23) (a) Formulation of national environmental policies, plans and programmes of a comprehensive and interdisciplinary nature, including the provision of adequate financing;

(b) Regional planning for land use and organization of economic activity, including improved settlement patterns, location of agricultural and industrial activities and other forms of employment;

(c) City planning and the organization of the urban environment, and its infrastructure;

(d) Rural land-use planning;

(e) Urban renewal with emphasis on slum clearance and rehabilitation of squatter settlements;

(f) Establishment and maintenance and protection of areas of cultural, aesthetic, recreational and scientific values;

(g) Mobilization of public support - including educational measures - and active participation of all elements of the community in the planning and execution of preventive and corrective measures;

(h) Systematic development of research and co-operation on environmental problems of human settlements, including the identification, collection and evaluation of necessary data for operational use.

B. Rational management of natural resources

(24) (a) Review national requirements for natural resource management and organization in light of national development goals and plans;

(b) Specify gaps between those requirements and actual facilities and provisions;

(c) Determine priorities for filling gaps:

(i) Through national means;

(ii) Through international co-operation;

(d) Review regional and national policy, legislation and regulatory control as it pertains to preservation of unique living organisms and biomes, including national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, flora and fauna and areas of scientific, recreational and aesthetic value. Determine in which way existing policy and legislation is inadequate;

(e) Review regional and national policy, legislation and regulatory control of utilization of the resource base as it pertains to environmental degradation, to determine the manner in which existing policy and legislation is inadequate;

(f) Develop a programme of research including the collection of ecological data which will permit a more accurate forecast to be made of the degree to which the environment will be altered as a result of utilizing the resource base.

C. Environmental degradation from pollution and nuisances

(25) (a) Identify reasonable techniques and methods to reduce, cure and minimize all forms of pollution and to disseminate all available information to member countries;

(b) Define, in particular, the problems of pollution both where effects are evident and action is urgently needed as well as where long-term or cumulative effects are anticipated;

(c) Evaluate the direction in which future work on the improvement of the environment should proceed;

(d) Identify areas for specific research on criteria, methodology and techniques for the abatement of pollution;

(e) Assess the consequences of new technology for the environment including research of alternative technological solutions - for example, plant derivatives and biological methods to replace persistent toxic chemicals for controlling pests.

Recommendations for international action to be considered by the Conference

(26) In making suggestions for international action, the Working Group stresses the fact that the United Nations Organization, its components and other international bodies, have important roles to play. These roles could include facilitation of communications, prevention of unnecessary duplication of efforts, and provision of financial and technical aid to prevent, arrest and reverse environmental deterioration.

A. Environmental aspects of human settlements

(27) (a) Multinational aspects of regional planning of neighbouring areas in different countries with strong economic or physical links;

(b) International co-operation and technical assistance to share knowledge and experience;

(c) Exchange of information on matters related to policies, legislation, administration, planning, financing and public participation;

(d) Formulation, through international consultation, of criteria for setting up national standards for land-use planning;

(e) Furthering research in areas related to urban and regional planning;

(f) Programmes for action to foresee, prevent and remedy harmful environmental consequences of natural catastrophes directly or indirectly related to man's activities.

B. Rational management of natural resources

(29) (a) Promote international aspects of natural resource management - for example, the seas and water systems common to two or more countries;

(b) Promote international co-operation or conventions for the management of natural resources - for example, migrating wildlife or the resources of the sea;

(c) Promote international co-operation and technical assistance to share knowledge and experience to facilitate, for example, the developing of criteria for use in setting up national standards in natural resource management;

(d) Exchange information on policies, legislation, administration, planning, financing and public participation;

(e) Provide long-term natural resource and environmental prospects and forecasts - for example, projected sources and demands and the effect upon the environment of meeting these demands;

(f) Promote the gathering of inventory and resource data and document storage and retrieval.

C. Environmental degradation from pollution and nuisances

(29) (a) Identify those areas where results which can have meaning in pollution control can best be achieved through international co-operation. Taking into account the varying circumstances in which pollution occurs, certain international regulatory "legislative" action may be needed:

(i) On a global scale, in the form of conventions or agreements;

(ii) On a regional or bilateral scale, in the form of agreements;

(b) Promote international co-ordination of national programmes;

(c) Promote internationally accepted criteria, standards and monitoring.

These are prerequisites for items (a) and (b) above;

(d) Request the Secretary-General to prepare a brief up-to-date report on present activities in the field of pollution undertaken by the specialized agencies, other governmental organizations and certain non-governmental organizations, as well as on information obtained from Governments on national action. When possible, the above-mentioned information should pertain as well to planned activities with special emphasis placed on the following topics:

(i) Pollutants (their sources, recipients and effects on human beings);

(ii) Criteria and standards (an inventory of existing national and international criteria and standards);

(iii) Monitoring (global, regional and national);

(iv) Economic and social implications (that is, studies on impact of anti-pollution action in these areas).

* * *

(30) The Working Group requests the Preparatory Committee to draw to the attention of the Secretary-General the fact that studies on these subject areas and the recommended actions should begin as soon as possible, with the assistance of experts and the specialized agencies. The Secretary-General should be requested by the Preparatory Committee to report the progress of these studies at its second session, including an indication of priorities.

(31) The Working Group deems it urgent that areas for immediate action should be identified prior to the 1972 Conference, and that the Preparatory Committee should discuss at its next session the preparation of draft recommendations, agreements and conventions for consideration by the 1972 Conference.

II. Drafting of a declaration on the human environment

(32) The 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment should be presented with a draft declaration on the human environment.

(33) The function of the Preparatory Committee, at the present stage, is to advise the Secretary-General on the objective(s) of the declaration and the best modality for its formulation.

(34) In addition to the declaration on the human environment, the 1972 Conference should also adopt recommendations for action, resolutions, and other conclusions.

(35) The declaration should be a document of basic principles, calling mankind's urgent attention to the many varied and interrelated problems of the human environment, and to draw attention to the rights and obligations of man and State and the international community in regard thereto.

(36) The declaration would serve to stimulate public opinion and community participation for the protection and betterment of the human environment and, where appropriate, for the restoration of its primitive harmony etc., in the interest of present and future generations. It would also provide guiding principles for Governments in their formulation of policy and set objectives for future international co-operation.

(37) In formulating the declaration on the human environment, due account has to be taken of the environmental stresses caused by the differences in social and economic development between various parts of the world.

(38) The Preparatory Committee is not, during the current session, in a position to draft the declaration. It, therefore, recommends to the Secretary-General that, after consultation with the Member States and in the light also of the discussions at the first session, that he include in his report to the second session of the Preparatory Committee suggestions as to the content of the declaration.

Organizational structure of the Conference

28. The Preparatory Committee gave preliminary consideration to this matter on the basis of paragraphs 106 to 121 of document E/4667 and of document A/CONF.48/PC/3. The Committee generally endorsed the view expressed in the latter document that it could only proceed at its first session to a preliminary exchange of views and should consider the matter in full detail at later sessions when the programme content of the Conference had been more fully defined.

29. Several delegates felt that the number of commissions during the Conference should be kept to a minimum and that the division between discussion of substantive problems and strategic areas for action proposed in document E/4667 might not be the most appropriate way of dealing with the subject matter since the difference between the two approaches might be difficult to make in many cases. Other delegates indicated that the consideration of actions, dealing "horizontally" through the over-all question of environmental management rather than with a particular element of it, such as, for instance, training problems, economic problems, or administrative bodies, should find its place in the structure of the Conference. The view was also expressed that, in the opening plenary sessions of the Conference, presentation of an introductory report of the Secretary-General, of reports on the problems in the major regions of the world and of reports from specialized agencies and international organizations, should be envisaged.

30. It was agreed that the Secretary-General should be invited to prepare further proposals for the organizational structure of the Conference for consideration by the next session of the Committee.

Documentation for the Conference

31. The Preparatory Committee considered this matter on the basis of paragraphs 122 to 129 of document E/4667 and document A/CONF.48/PC/4.

32. The special consultant to the Secretary-General outlined the different nature of the various types of documents which were proposed for the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment. He stressed that a clear distinction would have to be made between conference documents, which would be limited in number and volume and presented in the official languages, and information documents, which would be substituted under the responsibility of Governments or international organizations. He also emphasized that, while at this stage the whole question of documentation could obviously not be considered in detail, it appeared essential that the first session of the Committee should give its views on:

(a) The recommended outline of national reports to be requested at an early date from Governments;

(b) The desirability of having case studies presented at the Conference and the procedure to be followed for their selection.

33. It was the general consensus of the Committee that the documentation produced by the secretariat for the Conference should be kept to the strictest minimum and should be of the highest professional calibre and practical value. The need for making full use of already available material was stressed in that respect.

34. As regards national reports, the Committee recognized that they would be of great value, not only as a means of collecting and presenting information for the Conference, but also as a tool for each country to evaluate its own situation and thus prepare itself for full participation in the Conference. It was agreed that national reports should as far as possible be prepared on the basis of a common outline, with one emphasis on the management problems encountered and lessons learned in each country.

Recommendations

35. Working Group III, which was established to draw up a general outline for national reports, made the following recommendations which were adopted by the Preparatory Committee:

General outline for national reports

(1) National reports should serve as background material for the preparatory work of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment. They should therefore be considered as an integral part of the over-all preparations for the Conference.

(2) National reports will not be considered as conference documents; however, they could be made available before the Conference to Governments through the Secretariat upon request.

(3) National reports should be submitted to the Secretariat not later than 31 March 1971. Such reports should be limited to from twenty to thirty pages. It is suggested that the Secretary-General determine the progress being made in the preparation of national reports at appropriate intervals.

(4) Countries which so desire could submit additional and more comprehensive reports as well as case studies.

(5) In order to ensure the uniformity of the national reports, the Preparatory Committee recommends that the Secretariat should send a formal request to Governments containing detailed guiding principles, preferably by the end of April 1970.

(6) The following suggestions for the structure of national reports are provided to assist the Secretariat in such preparation:

(a) Description of problems (the guiding principles for this section should be based on relevant parts of the report of Working Group I);

(b) Measures at the national level:

Existing, planned and desirable measures at the national level:

Organizational and institutional arrangements;

Legislation and administration;

Planning;

Fiscal and financial policies;

Education and training;

Research;

Dissemination and practical use of knowledge;

Public information;

(c) Measures at the international level:

Existing, planned and desirable measures on the international level.

This part of the report would deal with problems that are difficult or impossible to solve by the actions of one country only, or whose solution would be greatly facilitated by international co-operation and bilateral or multilateral agreements, or both. The reports should also indicate such solutions which, in the view of the countries, could usefully be promoted by the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment.

36. There was broad support in the Committee for the need to have a number of selected case studies prepared by Governments for the Conference. A suitable procedure would be for the Secretary-General to invite Governments to submit proposals for case studies that they would be willing to prepare. The Governments concerned would then be invited by the Secretary-General to prepare selected case studies. The list of case studies would be submitted to the Preparatory Committee at its second session and the Committee might then wish to recommend additional studies.

37. It was stressed in that connexion that case studies relating to problems in developing countries would be very desirable and that technical assistance should, at the request of the Governments concerned, be extended as far as possible and desirable for their preparation - as well as for the preparation of national reports - particularly through the United Nations and the specialized agencies having relevant operational activities in the countries concerned.

38. The need for a limited number of specific reports from international organizations was stressed by the Committee. It was felt in that respect that such reports, the list of which could be established at the next session, were not to be of a general character, but should be geared towards the objectives of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment and should stress specific programmes of direct relevance to the Conference.

39. Among such reports, it was felt that the regional economic commissions could be invited to prepare reports on the situation concerning their specific regions. The preparation of these reports as conference documents would not prevent international organizations from making available, under their own responsibility, additional information on their activities.

40. Some consideration was given to the subject of introductory papers. Some delegations felt that a number of such reports might be useful as a starting point for the work of the Conference and its various commissions, particularly if short

introductory reports synthesizing the contents of the available background material could be drawn up by the Secretariat. That matter, however, could not be settled until the organizational structure of the Conference had been fully considered.

41. Finally, as regards background discussion papers (commission papers) to be prepared especially for the Conference, the Committee considered that the number and organization of the papers could not be firmly decided upon before the programme content of the Conference and its organizational structure had been put into final form. It was agreed that the papers should be of a limited number. They should in general be prepared with the help of leading specialists and reviewed by other leading experts from different countries and organizations, so as to gain the best possible presentation of the problems. It also felt that these discussion papers should, as far as possible, be geared to the basic objectives of the Conference - that is, adoption of recommendations and agreements by the Conference.

Measures to encourage national participation

42. The Committee gave preliminary consideration to the encouragement of national participation on the basis of paragraphs 102 to 105 and 135 of document E/4667. Paragraph 105, referring to the universality of the subjects to be discussed at the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment and the fact that environmental problems in any country may have repercussions throughout the entire world, stressed the fact that it was essential that all participating countries be adequately represented at the Conference. It suggested that consideration should be given to concrete steps which might be taken to ensure adequate representation from developing countries. Paragraph 135 dealt with steps which countries themselves might take immediately in preparing for their own participation.

43. Several delegations indicated the steps which their own countries were already taking in preparing for the Conference and pointed out that they were awaiting the views of the Preparatory Committee. The need for co-ordination at the national level of the many different agencies and authorities concerned with the environment was stressed. It was suggested that aid-giving countries should ensure that their aid ministries or authorities be represented on any national committees.

44. There was unanimous agreement on the need to ensure the fullest participation of developing countries in the Conference and on the need to maintain consultation with developing countries at all stages during the preparations for the Conference.

45. The Committee agreed to invite the Secretary-General to prepare a report for its second session making suggestions as to what concrete steps could be taken to facilitate the active participation of developing countries at the Conference.

Public information

46. The Preparatory Committee heard a statement from the Director of the Centre for Economic and Social Information (CESI), based on document A/CONF.43/PC/5, which set out a number of general considerations regarding arrangements for public information in relation to the preparations for the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment.

46a. The estimates for the Conference presented to the General Assembly had provided funds to cover information activities only in relation to the Conference itself in 1972, but the Director of CESI explained that he did not feel that the Secretary-General's mandate for promotional activities during the preparatory period could be carried out adequately without further appropriation of funds.

47. On that point, some members agreed that that aspect of the Conference preparations was of such great importance that further consideration should be given to the provision of additional funds, including appeals for voluntary contributions from Member States so that the Secretary-General could adequately fulfil the mandate entrusted to him under resolution 2531 (XXIV). Others, however, felt that this resolution had been adopted in the light of the financial estimates, provided to the General Assembly, and that the work to be carried out should be limited to what it was possible to accomplish within the framework of the regular budget of the United Nations information services.

48. There was unanimous agreement among members of the Preparatory Committee on the vital importance of ensuring the fullest possible information coverage not only for the Conference itself but also for the preparatory activities. The value of visual media was emphasized. Valuable information and educational activities could be undertaken through museums (and exhibits). Films were to be of the greatest importance, but, in particular, care was necessary to ensure their accuracy. The fact that television was not generally available in some developing countries would have to be borne in mind.

49. The Preparatory Committee agreed that it was important that the fullest possible use be made of national information sources and some delegations suggested that the Secretariat might prepare a programme of action which could be submitted as a guide for national activities to the national preparatory committee for the Conference. United Nations delegates should draw the attention of their Governments to these matters. The importance of a flow of information from Governments to the United Nations, as well as in the reverse direction, was emphasized.

50. Some members felt that the proposed United Nations Conference on the Human Environment provided one of the most promising opportunities ever available for the United Nations to have a positive influence on world opinion. So far, while the media had covered the question of the Conference in a number of Member States, the coverage in the local Press at United Nations Headquarters had been disappointing; more attention should be given to arousing interest among the press corps. The United Nations information facilities were very extensive and full use should be made of them.

51. The vital importance of involving youth and youth organizations in the preparations and in the work of the Conference was stressed by some delegations, as well as the need to provide information for that section of the community in all countries. It was also necessary to bear in mind the educational needs.

52. A suggestion was made that the possibility of a direct world telecast of part of the Conference itself should be examined.

Organization of the secretariat and consultations with
United Nations agencies and other organizations

53. The Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs announced the appointment of Mr. Jean A Mussard as Director of the Conference secretariat.

54. The Director for the Office of Science and Technology outlined briefly to the Committee the arrangements proposed for the Conference secretariat. It was to be associated with the Office for Science and Technology and would work in the closest association with the specialized agencies, with other units of the United Nations, and with the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) Sub-Committee on Science and Technology. The principal work of the Conference secretariat would be substantive preparation for the Conference and it was intended to appoint an officer to lead the work. Several specialized agencies had undertaken to second professional staff to this unit of the secretariat and, in addition, the fullest use would be made of consultants and experts. An officer would be seconded from the Centre for Economic and Social Information to undertake information activities (see A/CONF.48/PC/5, paragraph 6). As far as the actual organizational arrangements in Stockholm were concerned, the Conference Services of the United Nations Office in Geneva would carry the major responsibility. The Conference secretariat would be located at United Nations Headquarters in New York, though it might be desirable to have a small liaison group of the substantive preparations unit in Geneva to facilitate co-operation with the specialized agencies.

55. Most delegations who spoke on that point expressed their satisfaction with the proposals and considered furthermore that the arrangements were the responsibility of the Secretary-General, who had been entrusted with the organization of the Conference. But several delegations considered that it would be preferable to concentrate the essential part of the Conference secretariat in Geneva, taking into account the necessity for the secretariat to work in close liaison with the specialized agencies. The importance of proceeding with the substantive preparations immediately was emphasized.

III. OTHER BUSINESS

Second session of the Preparatory Committee

56. The Preparatory Committee discussed the question of the time and place for its second session. It was agreed that final decisions on these matters should be left to the Secretary-General in the light of the progress made by the Secretariat in following up the recommendations of the current session. If the Secretary-General felt it was desirable, the Committee would be prepared to meet in September 1970; otherwise it was proposed that its next session should be in January 1971. Several delegations suggested that if the latter course were to be followed, consideration should be given to holding the session in Geneva if this did not involve significant financial implications compared with meeting in New York. In connexion with the selection of the time of meeting, it was pointed out that the Secretary-General, in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 2581 (XXIV), would be making a report to the twenty-fifth session of the General Assembly on the progress being made in preparation for the Conference. In any event, the Secretary-General would keep in touch with the permanent missions of the members of the Preparatory Committee regarding the progress being made in the preparatory work.

57. The possibility of establishing contacts between the Preparatory Committee and the regions was discussed and several suggestions mentioned. One possibility would be for the Committee itself to hold meetings at the headquarters of the regional commissions. An alternative would be for the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee and members of the Committee to visit the regions concerned. The Secretariat was requested to examine the financial implications of such proposals.

ANNEXES

Annex I

AGENDA

1. Opening of the session and election of Chairman
2. Adoption of rules of procedure
3. Election of officers
4. Adoption of the agenda
5. Report of the Secretary-General on preparatory work required for the Conference
6. Further definition of the programme content and selection of topics for the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment
7. Consideration of the organizational structure for the Conference
8. Preparation of documentation for the Conference
9. Measures for encouraging national participation in the Conference
10. Arrangements regarding public information in relation to preparations for the Conference
11. Organization of the secretariat of the Conference and consultations with United Nations bodies and other appropriate organizations
12. Arrangements for the next meeting of the Preparatory Committee
13. Other business
14. Adoption of the report of the Preparatory Committee on its first session

Annex II

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

A. Members of the Preparatory Committee

ARGENTINA

Representative

José María Ruda, Ambassador

Alternate

Eduardo Bradley, Minister

Adviser

Carlos H. Bunge, Secretary

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J.A. de Araujo Castro, Ambassador, Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission

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by observers

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Khaled Al-Babtin, Third Secretary, Permanent Mission

Mubarak Al-Sabah, Attaché, Permanent Mission

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David W. Wilson, Second Secretary, Permanent Mission

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Mohamed M. El-Bahi, Second Secretary, Permanent Mission

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Priscilla J. Williams, Second Secretary, Permanent Mission

Pakistan

M. Farooq, Third Secretary, Permanent Mission

Philippines

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Aleksei K. Yeremenko, First Secretary, Permanent Mission

Venezuela

Jesus Alberto Fernández, Counsellor, Permanent Mission

Freddy Christians, Second Secretary, Permanent Mission

C. United Nations Secretariat

Secretary-General

U Thant

Representatives of the Secretary-General

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Jean A. Mussard, Director of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment secretariat

Guy B. Gresford, Director of the Office for Science and Technology

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Michel Batisse

Secretary, Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment

Adolfo Korn

Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)

Gerard Dekker, ECA, Addis Ababa

Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)

Amasa S. Bishop, Director-Designate, Division of Environment and Housing

B.F. Reiner, Officer-in-Charge, Division of Environment and Housing

D. United Nations bodies

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

George R. Francis, Evaluation Officer, New York

E. Specialized agencies, IAEA

International Labour Organisation (ILO)

Amir Ali, Chief, Relations Conference Department

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Donald W. Woodward, Director, FAO Liaison Office, New York

L.D. Swindale, Chief, Soil Resources Development, and Conservation Service

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Alfonso de Silva, Director, UNESCO Liaison Office, New York

A. Varnhaver, Acting Director, UNESCO Bureau of Relations with the United Nations in New York

World Health Organization (WHO)

R.L. Cooney, Director, WHO Liaison Office, New York

M.N. Kaplan, Special Assistant for Science to the Director-General

International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)

Ernesto Franco-Holguin, Deputy Special Representative for United Nations Organizations

World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

Carl Christian Wallen, WMO, Geneva

Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization (IMCO)

Y. Sasamura, Head of Marine Science and Technical Division

* * *

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

L.L. Issaev, Representative of the Director-General to the United Nations

F. Other intergovernmental organizations

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

Fred Hubbard

Organization of American States

Jesse D. Perkinson, Director of the Department of Scientific Affairs of the General Secretariat

José F. Sáiz, Department of Scientific Affairs of the General Secretariat (alternate)

G. Non-governmental organizations

Category II

Commission of the Churches on International Affairs

Richard M. Fagley

Friends World Committee for Consultation

Barrett Hollister, representative at the United Nations

International Union for Conservation of Nature and
Natural Resources

Harold J. Coolidge, President

Helen Carlson, New York representative

Annex III

LIST OF DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED TO THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE
AT ITS FIRST SESSION

| Agenda item and description of document | Symbol |
|--|------------------|
| Provisonal agenda (item 4) | A/CONF.48/PC/1 |
| Further definition of the programme content and selection of topics for the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (item 6) | A/CONF.48/PC/2 |
| Consideration of the organizational structure of the Conference (item 7) | A/CONF.48/PC/3 |
| Preparation of documentation for the Conference (item 8) | A/CONF.48/PC/4 |
| Arrangements regarding public information in relation to the preparations for the Conference (item 10) | A/CONF.48/PC/5 |
| Adoption of rules of procedure (item 2) | A/CONF.48/PC/L.1 |

Annex IV

STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OPENING THE FIRST SESSION OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

1. I wish to welcome you to this first session of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment. Never in the twenty-five-year history of the United Nations has there been a problem of more relevance to all nations than the present environmental crisis. The time has come for the United Nations, in the spirit and the letter of the Charter, to be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in solving the problems of the human environment.

2. The work which you are about to undertake is symptomatic of new trends which are emerging in contemporary events and which seem to me to mark the beginning of a new era in human history. The mastering of energy and the transformation of natural resources into innumerable instruments and goods at the service of man, brought about by the industrial revolution, have provided one of the most astounding pages of human history. It would seem, however, that the aims and methods of the industrial revolution, which has brought such immense prosperity to some areas of the earth, must come under review before it has even reached the entirety of the globe. A new civilization characterized by more human beings, with longer lives and a better quality of life has flowered in the last two centuries, and is spreading slowly over the entire world. Justice in the world-wide distribution of these benefits so far has not been ensured. Indeed, it has been one of the major preoccupations of the world community during the last twenty-five years to enhance the share of the poorer countries in these benefits and to help in their development.

3. The realization of a new and very disturbing aspect of the spreading and growing industrial civilization has now arisen: man has suddenly awakened to the dimensions, to the rapidity and to the mass effects of productive processes on the physical endowment and configuration of this planet and on its basic biological balances. To produce at any cost, without due consideration to effects on the environment, can no longer be the central preoccupation of man. Control of the effects of productive processes will require new economic thinking, new legal instruments, new administrative measures and new governmental priorities. I am convinced that men and institutions will be able to solve this problem in time, for under the pressure of necessity, man is quite capable of adapting to new conditions. The new challenge posed to industry can be solved by industry itself, once the minds of our best scientists and engineers are bent on devising clean processes of production and proper means of waste disposal.

4. Mankind is also coming to the realization that a new dimension of time, reaching substantially into the future, must be added to its thinking, planning and endeavours. For never before has the future been so decisively engendered and moulded by present-day decisions. Historically, man has been preoccupied with a time range of scarcely a few years ahead. Life spans were short. The rate of change was slow. Anyone who dealt with forecasts was labelled a utopian, a visionary or a dreamer. In our time it is the utopians who have become realists, and even their forecasts often fall short of reality. The seeds of future

benefits and levels of life on our planet are being planted now and are already beginning to germinate. We must carefully weigh the effects of present behaviour on the future if we do not wish to be considered by later generations as having failed in our foresight. It is consequently of paramount importance that the youth of the world be fully involved in our planning. I think that their current unrest and revolt against many of the values of the past arise in part from their uneasiness with the deterioration of the human environment and human situation. Seldom has any century or any generation been faced with such serious responsibilities.

5. The United Nations and its specialized agencies pioneered in dealing with prospective problems. We possess today sound long-term projections for a great variety of economic and social phenomena such as population, urbanization, education, food requirements, international trade, rates of growth in national income, and so forth. But much remains to be done: we need similar long-term forecasts for the consumption of our natural resources such as water, minerals and energy which will increase prodigiously in the decades ahead. We will need statistics and projections on the total effects of consumption, production and transportation processes on the human environment.

6. We are thus necessarily on the threshold of a new era of international co-operation. Whatever the political stalemates may be and however long they may last, it seems clear that most economic, social and physical world indicators will change by at least 100 per cent every twenty-five years: world population will double and so will world consumption of water, of energy, of minerals, of transportation, and so forth. Under the impact of rapid scientific and technological changes, nations are being brought closer together and problems are progressively becoming the same in all countries. The total effects of changes within all countries, added together, will require joint international surveillance, consultations and actions if human life on this planet is to be preserved and enriched.

7. It is urgent that we rapidly fill the gaps in our knowledge. While immense resources are being devoted by many towns, States and national Governments in order to obtain better knowledge of their territorial areas, not enough is being done to improve our collective knowledge and to monitor what is happening to our atmosphere and our oceans. Little is being done, for example, to calculate the totality of wastes and deleterious materials which are being introduced by nations and by international transports into our common resources through rivers and oceans, combustion and radiation. As noted in my report a/ on the problems of the human environment issued in May, 1969, only a few regional efforts had been made toward the development of systematic air-pollution sample networks.

8. I sincerely hope that the international community will decide to make the necessary arrangements so that all nations will be informed year by year of the changes occurring in vital elements of the human environment. The time has come when we must establish an appropriate world-wide network of environmental statistics and forecasts as we have done in other major economic and social areas of collective concern. The time has come when nations must realize that each of them has responsibilities towards the state of the natural endowment of the earth as a whole and that its individual actions added to individual actions of other

a/ Document E/4567.

nations may have collective deleterious effects. Concerted preventive action now is far less costly than to repair the damage after it has occurred.

9. At this first session of your Preparatory Committee, I would like to make one remark on the orientation of your work. When the Conference was proposed by the Government of Sweden b/ -- to which we must be so grateful -- one of the major preoccupations was to arouse world-wide attention to human environment problems. We are living in a world of extremely rapid communications and of great sensitivity to new emerging problems, and it would seem that this original objective of the Conference has already been largely achieved. The human environment is now a matter for almost daily discussion in Governments, in the Press, in non-governmental organizations, in the schools and in the municipalities of industrialized societies. Two years will pass before the Conference takes place. You must be alert to the rapid changes which are likely to take place during this period. The Conference must be in step with whatever developments may occur during this interval. It must live up to the expectations which will prevail two years hence. Knowledge about the human environment is likely to improve considerably in that time as well as public awareness of the problem. It would seem to me, therefore, that the Conference should be planned in a predominantly action-oriented manner.

10. The 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment can provide a unique opportunity for the United Nations family to provide leadership in dealing with a complex of problems which endanger the most fundamental well-being of mankind. I would like to make a passing reference to the considerable efforts already made by the United Nations institutional system in the environmental field as well as to the first international agreements concluded by major Governments. Let me remind you that the universality of the concern with human environment was dramatically recognized in 1963 with the entry into force of the tripartite treaty banning nuclear weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water. c/ This was one of the most enlightened acts of statesmanship witnessed in recent years. May I express the hope that the wisdom of nations inspired by the vision of a world united around the human objectives of peace, justice and prosperity will soon enrich human life with a renewed respect for the earth's resources, and reward us with a hostility-free and weapon-free human environment. Perhaps it is the collective menaces, arising from the world's scientific and technological strides and from their mass consequences, which will bind together nations, enhance peaceful co-operation and surmount, in the face of physical danger, the political obstacles to mankind's unity.

11. May I add that while the Conference is still more than two years away, the work to be done is considerable and it is important that no time be wasted. On my part, I hope to be able to announce to you in the very near future the appointment of a full Director in charge of the secretariat assigned to the preparation of the Conference.

12. I wish you every success in your important deliberations.

b/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Forty-fifth Session, Annexes, agenda item 12, document E/4466/Add.1.

c/ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 480 (1963), No. 6964, p. 43.