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DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION: ENVIRONMENT

Australia, Austria, Canada, Colombia, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia,
Ecuador, Malta, Mexico, Norway, Sweden, Trinidad and Tobago,
Tunisia, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and Uruguay;
revised draft resolution

International co-operation in the monitoring, assessment and
anticipation of environmental threats and in assistance in
cases of environmental emergencies

The General Assembly,

Convinced that one of the major global problems facing the world today is deterioration of the environment,

Recalling its resolution 43/196 of 20 December 1988 on a United Nations conference on environment and development,

Aware that environmental degradation caused by human activities has assumed unacceptable proportions and has led in some cases to irreversible changes in the environment, thus threatening life-sustaining ecosystems and undermining the health, well-being, development prospects and security of nations,

Also aware that potential environmental disasters, whether natural, accidental or caused by human beings, as well as accidents could pose serious and immediate dangers to populations and to the economic development and the environment of the affected countries and regions,

Convinced that through monitoring, assessment, anticipation and prompt multilateral response - in particular, on the part of the United Nations system - environmental threats could be minimized or even prevented,

Also convinced that early warnings of environmental threats will help Governments to take preventative action,

Conscious of the importance of broader participation in Earthwatch, which was established by the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment ^{1/} and is operated by the United Nations Environment Programme, in order to strengthen its capacity to make authoritative assessments, anticipate environmental degradation and issue early warnings to the international community,

Noting with appreciation the work undertaken by the United Nations Environment Programme to develop criteria for the identification of environmental threats at the national, regional and global levels,

Stressing the need for close co-operation between all countries - in particular, through a broad exchange of information, scientific knowledge, experience and technology - in monitoring, assessing and anticipating environmental threats, dealing with environmental emergencies, and rendering timely assistance, at the request of Governments, in accordance with respective national laws, regulations and policies and taking into account the particular needs and requirements of the developing countries,

Affirming the need in this context for closer co-operation and co-ordination of the United Nations Environment Programme, the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator, the World Health Organization and the World Meteorological Organization, and other competent organs, programmes and agencies of the United Nations system,

Taking into account the fact that other proposals have been made on the expansion within the United Nations system of international co-operation in monitoring, assessing and anticipating environmental threats and the rendering of timely environmental assistance in cases of emergencies,

1. Recognizes the need to strengthen international co-operation in monitoring, assessing and anticipating environmental threats and rendering assistance in cases of environmental emergencies;
2. Reaffirms that the United Nations system, through the United Nations General Assembly, due to its universal character, is the appropriate forum for concerted political action on global environmental problems, as referred to in this resolution;
3. Reaffirms also the sovereignty of all nations over their natural resources and stresses their accountability to preserve and protect global and regional environments in accordance with their capacities and specific responsibilities;

1/ See Report of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, Stockholm, 5-16 June 1972 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.73.II.A.14)

4. Requests the Secretary-General to submit a report on the matters addressed in the present resolution for consideration during the preparatory process for a United Nations conference on environment and development;

5. Also requests the Secretary-General, assisted by the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, to define in the report mentioned above, on the basis of the views of Member States and existing national and international legislation in this field, possible ways and means to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations:

(a) To monitor, assess and anticipate those threats;

(b) To establish criteria for determining when environmental degradation undermines health, well-being, development prospects or security at the national, regional and global levels to such an extent that international action may be required, if requested;

(c) To issue early warnings to the international community when such degradation becomes imminent;

(d) To facilitate intergovernmental co-operation in monitoring, assessing and anticipating environmental threats;

(e) To assist Governments facing environmental emergencies, at their request;

(f) To mobilize financial resources and technical co-operation to fulfil the above tasks, taking into account the needs of the countries concerned, particularly the developing countries;

6. Invites the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme to consider the report referred to in paragraph 4 above and to present its views thereon to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session, through the Economic and Social Council.
