



General Assembly

Distr.
LIMITEDA/C.2/44/L.60
24 November 1989

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Forty-fourth session
SECOND COMMITTEE
Agenda item 82 (f)

DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION:
ENVIRONMENT

Draft resolution submitted by the Vice-Chairman of the
Committee, Mr. David Payton (New Zealand), on the basis
of informal consultations held on revised draft
resolution A/C.2/44/L.29/Rev.1

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 main global problems facing the world today is the deterioration of the environment,

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

Aware that increasing environmental degradation caused by human activities has led in some cases to irreversible changes in the environment, which threaten life-sustaining ecosystems and undermine the health, well-being, development prospects and the very survival of life on the planet,

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, if requested - in particular, on the part of the United Nations system - environmental threats could be minimized or even prevented,

Also convinced that early warning of emerging environmental threats and degradation would help Governments to take preventive action,

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 and experience as well as transfer of 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 between 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, bearing in mind the co-ordinating role of the United Nations Environment Programme on environmental matters in the United Nations system,

Taking note of the fact that other proposals have been made on strengthening and improving the effectiveness within the United Nations system of international co-operation in monitoring, assessing and anticipating environmental threats and the rendering of timely assistance in cases of environmental 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, owing to its universal character, is the appropriate forum for concerted political action on global environmental problems;
3. Underlines the importance of broader participation in Earthwatch, established by the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment and 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;
4. Reaffirms that States have, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law, the sovereign right to exploit their own resources pursuant to their environmental policies and also reaffirms their responsibility to ensure that activities within their jurisdiction or control do not cause damage to the environment of other States or of areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction and the need to play their due role in preserving and protecting the global and regional environment in accordance with their capacities and specific responsibilities;

5. Requests the Secretary-General, assisted by the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, to prepare a report, on the basis of the views of Member States and existing national and international legislation in this field, containing proposals and recommendations on possible ways and means to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations:

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

(b) To define criteria for determining when environmental degradation undermines health, well-being, development prospects and the very survival of life on the planet to such an extent that international co-operation 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. Also requests the Secretary-General to submit the report mentioned above for consideration during the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development;

7. Invites the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme to consider the report referred to in paragraph 5 above and to present its views thereon to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session, through the Economic and Social Council.
