

guide, support and monitor actions to achieve environmentally sound development and stimulate and co-ordinate action to deal with environmental problems.

117. The major priorities and functions of the United Nations Environment Programme should be:

(a) To provide leadership, advice and guidance in the United Nations system on restoring, protecting, and improving the environmental basis for, and in general act as a catalyst in the promotion of, sustainable development;

(b) To monitor, assess and report regularly on the state of the environment and natural resources and emerging environmental issues;

(c) To support priority scientific and technological research on major environmental and natural resource protection issues;

(d) To make available, in co-operation with other agencies where appropriate, guidance for environmental management, including the development of management techniques, criteria and indicators for environmental quality standards and guidelines for the sustainable use and management of natural resources;

(e) To initiate and support the programmes and activities worked out by the developing countries for dealing with their serious environmental problems;

(f) To initiate and facilitate the development and, upon request, the co-ordination of the implementation of action plans in the developing countries for the management of ecosystems and critical environmental problems. Such plans should be implemented and financed by the Governments concerned with appropriate external assistance;

(g) To encourage and promote international agreements on critical environmental issues and to support and facilitate the development of international laws, conventions and co-operative arrangements for environmental and natural resource conservation and protection;

(h) In co-operation with other concerned institutions, to establish and strengthen the institutional and professional capacity of developing countries, with a view to integrating environmental considerations into their development policy and planning;

(i) To promote awareness of environmental matters through education and the mass media;

(j) To co-operate with the United Nations Development Programme and other United Nations agencies, the World Bank and regional development banks, to strengthen the environmental dimensions of their programmes and technical assistance projects, *inter alia*, through training and personnel secondments.

118. Specialized agencies, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system should more speedily assume full operational and financial responsibility for environmental programmes supported by the United Nations Environment Programme in their sectors included in the system-wide medium-term environment programme and the Environment Fund. The human and financial resources which will become available to the United Nations Environment Programme as a result should be concentrated on the priority areas listed above.

119. Environmentally sound development cannot be assured solely by actions of governmental, intergovernmental or international organizations. It requires the participation of other entities, particularly industry, non-governmental environmental and development organizations and the scientific community. Non-governmental organizations have important contributions to make in various areas, including environmental education and awareness, as well as design and implementation of programmes at the grass-roots levels. The scientific community should continue to play an important role in environmental research and risk assessment and international scientific co-operation.

120. Regional and continental co-operative arrangements are being established to deal with common environmental problems. For example, the first session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, held at Cairo in 1985, adopted the Cairo Programme for African Co-operation and modalities to implement it. Governments and development co-operation agencies should support such institutional arrangements and programmes.

## 42/187. Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development

*The General Assembly,*

*Concerned* about the accelerating deterioration of the human environment and natural resources and the consequences of that deterioration for economic and social development,

*Believing* that sustainable development, which implies meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, should become a central guiding principle of the United Nations, Governments and private institutions, organizations and enterprises,

*Recognizing*, in view of the global character of major environmental problems, the common interest of all countries to pursue policies aimed at sustainable and environmentally sound development,

*Convinced* of the importance of a reorientation of national and international policies towards sustainable development patterns,

*Recalling* that, in its resolution 38/161 of 19 December 1983 on the process of preparation of the Environmental Perspective to the Year 2000 and Beyond to be prepared by the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme, it welcomed the establishment of a special commission, which later assumed the name World Commission on Environment and Development, to make available a report on environment and the global *problématique* to the year 2000 and beyond, including proposed strategies for sustainable development,

*Recognizing* the valuable role played in the preparation of the report of the World Commission by the Intergovernmental Inter-sessional Preparatory Committee of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme, as envisaged by the General Assembly in its resolution 38/161,

*Recalling* that in resolution 38/161 it decided that, on matters within the purview of the United Nations Environment Programme, the report of the Commission should in the first instance be considered by the Governing Council of the Programme, for transmission to the General Assembly together with the comments of the Council and for use as basic material in the preparation, for adoption by the Assembly, of the Environmental Perspective, and that on those matters which were under consideration or review by the Assembly itself, it would consider the relevant aspects of the report of the Commission,

*Taking note* of Governing Council decision 14/14 of 19 June 1987<sup>46</sup> transmitting the report of the Commission to the General Assembly,

*Noting* that the Environmental Perspective to the Year 2000 and Beyond<sup>51</sup> has taken account of the main recommendations contained in the report of the Commission,

*Recognizing* the instrumental role of the Commission in revitalizing and reorienting discussions and deliberations on environment and development and in enhancing the understanding of the causes of present environmental and development problems, as well as in demonstrating the ways in which they transcend institutional frontiers and in opening new perspectives on the interrelationship between environment and development as a guide to the future,

*Emphasizing* the need for a new approach to economic growth, as an essential prerequisite for eradication of poverty and for enhancing the resource base on which present and future generations depend,

1. *Welcomes* the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development entitled "Our Common Future";<sup>12</sup>

2. *Notes with appreciation* the important contribution made by the Commission to raising the consciousness of decision-makers in Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental international organizations, industry and other fields of economic activity, as well as of the general public, in regard to the imperative need for making the transition towards sustainable development, and calls upon all concerned to make full use in this regard of the report of the Commission;

3. *Agrees* with the Commission that while seeking to remedy existing environmental problems, it is imperative to influence the sources of those problems in human activity, and economic activity in particular, and thus to provide for sustainable development;

4. *Agrees further* that an equitable sharing of the environmental costs and benefits of economic development between and within countries and between present and future generations is a key to achieving sustainable development;

5. *Concurs* with the Commission that the critical objectives for environment and development policies which follow from the need for sustainable development must include preserving peace, reviving growth and changing its quality, remedying the problems of poverty and satisfying human needs, addressing the problems of population growth and of conserving and enhancing the resource base, reorienting technology and managing risk, and merging environment and economics in decision-making;

6. *Decides* to transmit the report of the Commission to all Governments and to the governing bodies of the organs, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system, and invites them to take account of the analysis and recommendations contained in the report of the Commission in determining their policies and programmes;

7. *Calls upon* all Governments to ask their central and sectoral economic agencies to ensure that their policies, programmes and budgets encourage sustainable development and to strengthen the role of their environmental and natural resource agencies in advising and assisting central and sectoral agencies in that task;

8. *Calls upon* the governing bodies of the organs, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system to review their policies, programmes, budgets and activities aimed at contributing to sustainable development;

9. *Calls upon* the governing bodies of other relevant multilateral development assistance and financial institutions to commit their institutions more fully to pursuing sustainable development in establishing their policies and programmes in accordance with the national development plans, priorities and objectives established by the recipient Governments themselves;

10. *Requests* the Secretary-General, through the appropriate existing mechanisms, including the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination, to review and co-ordinate on a regular basis the efforts of all the organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to pursue sustainable development, and to report thereon to the General Assembly through the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme and the Economic and Social Council;

11. *Stresses* the essential role of the United Nations Environment Programme, within its mandate, in catalyzing the sustainable development efforts of the United Na-

tions system, while fully taking into account the co-ordinating responsibilities of the Economic and Social Council, and agrees with the Commission that that role should be strengthened and that the resources of the Environment Fund should be substantially enlarged, with greater participation;

12. *Considers* that the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme, within its mandate and with participation, when appropriate, at the ministerial level, should examine on a periodic basis the long-term strategies for realizing sustainable development, and should include the results of its examinations in its reports to be submitted to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council;

13. *Agrees* that the catalytic and co-ordinating role of the United Nations Environment Programme in the United Nations system should be reinforced in its future work on environmental and natural resource issues;

14. *Reaffirms* the need for additional financial resources from donor countries and organizations to assist developing countries in identifying, analysing, monitoring, preventing and managing environmental problems in accordance with their national development plans, priorities and objectives;

15. *Reaffirms* the need for developed countries and appropriate organs and organizations of the United Nations system to strengthen technical co-operation with the developing countries to enable them to develop and enhance their capacity for identifying, analysing, monitoring, preventing and managing environmental problems in accordance with their national development plans, priorities and objectives;

16. *Invites* Governments, in co-operation with the regional commissions and the United Nations Environment Programme and, as appropriate, intergovernmental organizations, to support and engage in follow-up activities, such as conferences, at the national, regional, and global levels;

17. *Calls upon* Governments to involve non-governmental organizations, industry and the scientific community more fully in national and international activities to support efforts towards sustainable development;

18. *Invites* the governing bodies of the organs, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system to report, as appropriate, through the Economic and Social Council, to the General Assembly, not later than at its forty-fourth session, on progress made in their organizations towards sustainable development, and to make such reports available to the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme at its next regular session;

19. *Also invites* the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme to provide comments on matters concerning progress on sustainable development that fall within its mandate, on the above-mentioned reports and on other developments, for submission to the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session of 1989 and to the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session;

20. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-third session, through the Economic and Social Council, a progress report on the implementation of the present resolution and to the Assembly at its forty-fourth session a consolidated report on the same subject;

21. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-third session a sub-item entitled "A long-term

strategy for sustainable and environmentally sound development” under the agenda item entitled “Development and international economic co-operation”.

*96th plenary meeting  
11 December 1987*

**42/188. Countries stricken by desertification and drought in Africa**

*The General Assembly,*

Recalling its resolutions 39/208 of 17 December 1984 and 40/175 of 17 December 1985, and its decision 41/454 of 8 December 1986,

Aware that the prime responsibility in the struggle against desertification and the effects of drought rests with the countries concerned, and that such action is an essential component of their long-term development,

Also aware that the problems of desertification and drought are increasingly assuming a structural and endemic character, and that real and permanent solutions must be found in a global effort based on concerted action by the stricken countries and the international community,

Recalling the commitment of African Governments, as expressed in the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990,<sup>60</sup> to undertake and to continue as soon as possible measures to combat drought and desertification,

Recalling the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification adopted by the United Nations Conference on Desertification,<sup>55</sup> and taking note of decisions 14/15 A and B of 18 June 1987 of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme<sup>46</sup> concerning desertification,

Recalling with satisfaction the active support and the commitment to action expressed forcefully by the international community, including the United Nations system, at the thirteenth special session of the General Assembly, on the critical economic situation in Africa,

Welcoming the initiative of the Government of Senegal in convening the Ministerial Conference for a joint policy to combat desertification in the countries of the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel and the Economic Community of West African States, in the Maghreb countries, in Egypt and in the Sudan (COMIDES), and recalling with satisfaction the results achieved and the resolutions adopted by the Conference at its first and second sessions, held at Dakar in July 1984,<sup>61</sup> and in November 1985,<sup>62</sup> which set up COMIDES as a ministerial consultation mechanism,

1. Takes note with satisfaction of the proposals concerning concrete measures to be taken set out in the report of the Secretary-General on the countries stricken by desertification and drought;<sup>63</sup>

2. Takes note also of the sustained and praiseworthy efforts made by the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel to combat desertification and drought, and of its fruitful co-operation with Governments and the organs and bodies of the United Nations system;

3. Welcomes the progress made since the establishment by six East African countries of the Intergovernmental Authority for Drought and Development and invites the international community to continue to support the implementation of the Plan of Action of the six countries and to furnish them with sufficient financial and technical resources for this purpose;

4. Appeals urgently to the members of the international community, particularly donor countries, while strengthening their support for the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990, to continue to support the Ministerial Conference for a joint policy to combat desertification, the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel and the Intergovernmental Authority for Drought and Development;

5. Reaffirms the role of the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office in the co-ordination of the efforts of the United Nations to help the States members of the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel and the Intergovernmental Authority for Drought and Development to carry out their programmes;

6. Appeals to all Governments to increase their support for the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office, in particular by making voluntary contributions to it at the United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities, but also by financing directly the projects sponsored by the Office, which enable it to respond to the priority needs of the Sudano-Sahelian countries;

7. Welcomes with satisfaction the establishment of the Special Programme for Sub-Saharan African Countries Affected by Drought and Desertification by the International Fund for Agricultural Development;<sup>64</sup>

8. Takes note with satisfaction of the generosity and solidarity with which the international community has responded to the assistance needs resulting from the emergency in Africa, particularly with regard to food aid and its transport, medical assistance and the threat of grasshoppers and locusts;

9. Also appeals to all members of the international community, the organs and bodies of the United Nations, regional and subregional financial institutions, and non-governmental organizations to continue to give their full support in all forms, including financial and technical aid or any other form of assistance, to the development efforts of the countries stricken by desertification and drought;

10. Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session, through the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session of 1989, a report on the implementation of the present resolution.

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<sup>60</sup> Resolution S-13/2, annex.

<sup>61</sup> See A/39/530, annex.

<sup>62</sup> See A/C.2/40/10, annex.

<sup>63</sup> A/41/346-E/1986/96, paras. 53-77.

<sup>64</sup> See IFAD, GC 9/L.7.