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**United Nations  
Environment Assembly of the  
United Nations Environment Programme**

**United Nations Environment Assembly of the  
United Nations Environment Programme  
Second session  
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**Main results of the sixty-ninth and seventieth sessions of the  
General Assembly of relevance to the United Nations  
Environment Assembly**

**Note by the Executive Director**

*Summary*

The present note highlights some resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth and seventieth sessions that are relevant to the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

Special attention has been given to resolutions that are related to both the lead-up and the follow-up to the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda and its outcome document entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” (A/RES/70/1).

In addition, reference is made to those resolutions that are expected to require specific actions by UNEP, either individually within its programme of work or as part of the United Nations system as a whole.

## I. Introduction

1. During its seventieth session, the General Assembly adopted 251 resolutions covering diverse areas including sustainable development and other environmental, social and economic matters; administrative and budgetary matters; disarmament and international security; human rights, social, humanitarian and cultural matters; and matters related to cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations.<sup>1</sup>
2. Notably, a significant number of resolutions included links to sustainable development and provisions related to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
3. Some of those resolutions are of direct relevance to the programme of work of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), particularly its subprogrammes on environmental governance, ecosystem management, climate change, disasters and conflicts, chemicals and waste, and resource efficiency.
4. A total of 43 draft resolutions were recommended for General Assembly adoption by the Second Committee, whose deliberations and decisions on economic and financial issues are of special relevance to UNEP, particularly with regard to resolutions on sustainable development, including environmental matters.
5. The following sections summarize the General Assembly resolutions that are relevant to UNEP, underlining not only their main provisions but also their significance to the mandate and future work of UNEP: section II refers to the adoption of “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” and includes resolutions related to its follow-up; and section III refers to resolutions of relevance to the UNEP programme and various subprogrammes of work, including those that may require follow-up actions either individually or as part of the United Nations system. The summaries of resolutions are organized chronologically under each section, following their assigned symbols and numbers.

## II. 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and transition towards its implementation

### A. Resolution 69/283: Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction for the period 2015–2030

6. In its resolution 69/283, the General Assembly outlined a comprehensive framework with the overarching goal of reducing disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods, health and in the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities and countries, based on seven specific targets. The Framework identifies four priority areas for national, regional and global action: understanding disaster risk; strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk; investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience; and enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to “build back better” in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction.
7. The Sendai Framework also refers to specific areas of relevance to the UNEP mandate, including early warning and assessment, risk-sensitive development programming, environmental drivers of disaster risk, sustainable management of ecosystems as a way to build resilience, and financial and risk-sharing instruments.

### B. Resolution 69/313: Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development

8. By its resolution 69/313, the General Assembly adopted the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, outlining a comprehensive framework for financing for sustainable development that acknowledges the universal, transformative and integrative nature of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the need to mobilize financing from all sources. The Agenda contains seven action areas on domestic public resources; domestic and international private business and finance; international development cooperation; international trade as an engine for development; debt and debt sustainability; addressing systemic issues; and science, technology, innovation and capacity-building.
9. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda also refers to specific means of implementation for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development relevant to the UNEP mandate, including on climate finance; fossil-fuel subsidies; natural capital accounting; environmental, social and governance reporting by

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<sup>1</sup> All resolutions adopted by the Assembly at its seventieth session can be consulted online at <http://www.un.org/en/ga/70/resolutions.shtml>.

businesses; carbon pricing; fostering sustainable investment in environmental areas such as energy or biodiversity; and the transfer of environmentally sound technologies.

10. Furthermore, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda provides for the establishment of a Technology Facilitation Mechanism based on multi-stakeholder collaboration and composed of the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Team on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals, an annual multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the sustainable development goals, and an online platform to serve as an information gateway on existing initiatives in that context. The General Assembly recognized the work of UNEP as one of the agencies leading the United Nations system's efforts in that regard.

### **C. Resolution 69/321: Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly**

11. In its resolution 69/321, the General Assembly addressed various aspects of its own role and authority, as well as its working methods, with a view to further pursuing objectives such as coordination and communication among the Main Committees and improving the management of the negotiation process for Assembly resolutions.

12. The resolution also dedicated a special section to the process of selection and appointment of the Secretary-General. Among other provisions, the Assembly emphasized that the process should be guided by the principles of transparency and inclusiveness, building on best practices and the participation of all Member States; stressed the need to ensure equal and fair distribution based on gender and geographical balance, while meeting the highest possible requirements; requested the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council to start the process of soliciting candidates through a joint letter addressed to all Member States, containing a description of the entire process; also requested them to jointly circulate on an ongoing basis the names of candidates together with accompanying documents, including curricula vitae; and took note of the recommendations contained in the relevant report of the Joint Inspection Unit proposing that the General Assembly conduct hearings or meetings with candidates.

### **D. Resolution 70/1: Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

13. The United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, held in New York from 25 to 27 September 2015, and convened as a high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly, adopted the document "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" as resolution 70/1, concluding a process begun at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and incorporating the work of the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals.

14. The 2030 Agenda is defined in its preamble as an action plan for people, planet and prosperity, which seeks to foster peace and envisages a revitalized Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

15. Furthermore, the Agenda has an unprecedented scope and significance as it is accepted by all countries and applicable to all, taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities. Thus, the goals and targets are universal and involve the entire world – developed and developing countries alike.

16. The goals and targets in the Agenda are preceded by a declaration that includes a comprehensive vision of aspirations; a set of shared principles and commitments, including the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, as well as the outcomes of major United Nations conferences and summits; a survey of today's most pressing global challenges; and a general characterization of the new agenda, its means of implementation and its follow-up and review mechanism.

17. The 2030 Agenda is composed of 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 associated targets that are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development. As in the case of the social and economic dimensions, for the environmental dimension of sustainable development, integration and indivisibility further imply that interlinkages are of crucial importance.

18. The agenda also includes a section that identifies means of implementation and the requirements for an enhanced and revitalized Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, which is meant to be supported and complemented by the policies and options delineated in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

19. Finally, the 2030 Agenda outlines a framework for systematic follow-up to and review of implementation over the next 15 years, which will operate at the national, regional and global levels. It is relevant to note that at the global level the high-level political forum on sustainable development will have a central role in overseeing a network of follow-up and review processes, working coherently with the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and other relevant organs and forums, in accordance with existing mandates. Thematic reviews of progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, including cross-cutting issues, will also take place at the high-level political forum, and these will be supported by reviews by the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council and other intergovernmental bodies and forums, such as the United Nations Environment Assembly, which should reflect the integrated nature of the Goals as well as the interlinkages between them.

**E. Resolution 70/201: Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development**

20. In resolution 70/201, the General Assembly recognized that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development built upon elements of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled “The future we want”; urged the implementation of the priorities for small island developing States identified in the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway; requested the Secretary-General to provide an updated report on the activities for the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All 2014–2024; and acknowledged the opportunities provided by regional and subregional voluntary reviews on sustainable development.

21. The General Assembly also took note of reports of the Secretary-General on mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development throughout the United Nations system and invited the Secretary-General to continue such reporting, including for consideration of the high-level political forum.

22. On matters directly linked to the work of UNEP as the secretariat of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns (10YFP), the General Assembly recalled the arrangement to designate the Economic and Social Council as the ad interim Member State body to receive reports from the Board and Secretariat of the 10YFP and affirmed that due consideration should continue to be given to sustainable consumption and production at the meetings of the high-level political forum held under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council.

**F. Resolution 70/210: Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)**

23. In its resolution 70/210, the General Assembly further defined organizational and preparatory aspects of the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), to be held in Quito from 17 to 20 October 2016. Specifically, the Assembly decided on matters such as the rules and procedures of the Conference, the arrangements for accreditation and participation of stakeholders, and further details of the preparatory process, including informal intergovernmental negotiations on the draft outcome document.

**G. Resolution 70/221: Operational activities for development of the United Nations system**

24. In its resolution 70/221, the General Assembly referred to several aspects of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system, such as funding, national capacity development, effectiveness, the resident coordinator system, results-based management and evaluation, which outline some of the key areas and priorities in the context of the intergovernmental deliberations on the next quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, to be considered at the seventy-first session of the General Assembly in 2016.

25. The General Assembly welcomed the ongoing dialogue of the Economic and Social Council on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system, which considers the interlinkages between the alignment of functions, funding practices, governance structures, the capacity and impact of the system, partnership approaches and organizational arrangements. The Assembly also stated its expectation that the dialogue be reflected in the report of the Secretary-General on the next quadrennial comprehensive policy review.

26. In a provision of high relevance to UNEP, as part of the United Nations development system, the Assembly requested entities to ensure consistency and alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in the context of midterm reviews and the preparation of strategic plans and frameworks.

#### **H. Resolution 70/249: Programme budget for the biennium 2016–2017**

27. By its resolution 70/249, the General Assembly approved budget appropriations and income estimates for the biennium 2016–2017, as well as financing of the appropriations for 2016. Specifically, the General Assembly approved appropriations totalling \$5,401,794,400. A total of \$464,597,500 was allocated to international cooperation for development, and mandates related to the follow-up to the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda by the Department of Social and Economic Affairs will be financed from that allocation. Of that amount, \$35,331,400 was allocated to the environment (UNEP).

### **III. Resolutions of potential relevance to the programme of work of the United Nations Environment Programme**

#### **A. Environmental governance subprogramme**

##### **1. Resolution 69/223: Report of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme**

28. In its resolution 69/223, which is directly linked to the environmental governance subprogramme and the follow-up relating to the mandates for the strengthening of UNEP arising from paragraph 88 of “The Future We Want”, the General Assembly welcomed the holding of the first session of the United Nations Environment Assembly and took note with appreciation of its ministerial outcome document.

29. The General Assembly also reiterated the importance of capacity-building and technology support as important components of the work of UNEP and called for the continued implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building; stressing the continuing need for UNEP to conduct up-to-date, comprehensive, scientifically based and policy-relevant global environmental assessments.

30. Furthermore, the Assembly recognized the participation of UNEP in the elaboration of and the summit on the post-2015 development agenda.

##### **2. Resolution 69/314: Tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife**

31. In its resolution 60/314, the General Assembly welcomed the adoption of United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 1/3, on illegal trade in wildlife, in which the Environment Assembly called upon the General Assembly to consider the issue of illegal wildlife trade at its sixty-ninth session.

32. Overall, General Assembly resolution 60/314 included a variety of provisions to encourage Member States to adopt measures to prevent and counter the serious problem of crimes having an impact on the environment, such as illicit trafficking in wildlife and wildlife products, as well as to take steps at the national level to prevent, combat and eradicate illegal trade in wildlife, on both the supply and demand sides.

33. The Assembly also called upon United Nations organizations to continue to support, within their respective mandates and in line with Economic and Social Council resolution 2013/40, efforts by Member States to fight illicit trafficking in wildlife – for example, through capacity-building and by supporting alternative livelihoods, and to improve cooperation with all relevant stakeholders in order to facilitate a holistic and comprehensive approach by the international community.

34. The General Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to further improve the coordination of activities undertaken by United Nations specialized agencies, funds and programmes relating to the scope of the resolution.

35. Furthermore, the resolution requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its seventieth session on the global status of illicit trafficking in wildlife, including poaching and illegal trade, and to make proposals for possible future action.

**3. Resolution 70/202: Follow-up to and implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States**

36. In its resolution 70/202, the General Assembly, among other things, called upon the United Nations system to continue to support small island developing States in their efforts to implement national sustainable development strategies and programmes by incorporating the priorities and activities of such States into their relevant strategic and programmatic frameworks, in line with their mandates and overall priorities.

37. In addition, the General Assembly decided to establish the Small Island Developing States Partnership Framework to monitor and ensure the full implementation of pledges and commitments through partnerships for small island developing States, with the Framework to consist of a steering committee open to all Member States and an annual multi-stakeholder small island developing States partnership dialogue, also encouraging complementary regional and national dialogues.

**4. Resolution 70/232: Rights of indigenous peoples**

38. In its resolution 70/232 the General Assembly, among other things, welcomed the progress achieved in following up on the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, including the development of a system-wide action plan to ensure a coherent United Nations approach to achieving the ends of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

39. In addition, the General Assembly requested the President of the General Assembly to conduct consultations with Member States, indigenous peoples' representatives and institutions from all regions of the world on possible measures to enable the participation of indigenous peoples' representatives in meetings of relevant United Nations bodies on issues affecting them, which would include the United Nations Environment Assembly.

**5. Resolution 70/235: Oceans and the law of the sea**

40. In its resolution 70/235, adopted with 143 votes in favour, 1 against and 4 abstentions, the General Assembly, among other things, called on States to take measures consistent with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea for the protection and preservation of the marine environment.

41. The General Assembly also referred to matters affecting the health of the oceans and marine biodiversity relevant to the UNEP mandate, including marine pollution, marine debris, ocean acidification, climate change and alien invasive species, as well as science and the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects.

42. The General Assembly highlighted actions in the context of efforts in which UNEP takes part under frameworks such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities, the Global Oceans Observing System, the Regular Process and specific activities to address the sources and impacts of marine debris.

43. The General Assembly called on States to implement United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 1/6 on marine plastic debris and microplastics and acknowledged mandates therein related to the relevant study to be prepared by UNEP for the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly.

44. In addition, the General Assembly noted the adoption of the Minamata Convention on Mercury and encouraged States to ratify, approve or accede to the Convention.

**B. Ecosystem management subprogramme**

**1. Resolution 70/199: United Nations forest instrument**

45. In its resolution 70/199, the General Assembly recalled Economic and Social Council resolution 2015/33, entitled "International arrangement on forests beyond 2015", adopted on the recommendation of the United Nations Forum on Forests at its eleventh session, and decided to extend the timeline of the global objectives on forests to 2030, in line with the timeline of the 2030 Agenda, and to rename the non-legally-binding instrument on all types of forests the United Nations forest instrument.

**2. Resolution 70/206: Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa**

46. In its resolution 70/206, the General Assembly requested the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa to collaborate with the secretariats of the other Rio conventions and other partners to support the implementation and monitoring of and follow-up to voluntary land degradation neutrality targets and initiatives. The Assembly also invited the secretariat of the Convention and other relevant agencies, such as UNEP, to seek cooperation to achieve Sustainable Development Goals target 15.3.

**3. Resolution 70/207: Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and its contribution to sustainable development**

47. In its resolution 70/207, the General Assembly, among other things, stressed the importance of mainstreaming biodiversity into the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, acknowledged the importance of improving coherence and enhancing synergies among the biodiversity-related conventions and noted ongoing work in the related liaison groups.

**4. Resolution 70/226: United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development**

48. In its resolution 70/226, the General Assembly decided to convene the high-level United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, to be held in Fiji from 5 to 9 June 2017. The General Assembly will consider the modalities of the conference before the end of its seventieth session.

**C. Climate change subprogramme**

**Resolution 70/205: Protection of global climate for present and future generations of humankind**

49. In the most actionable provision of its resolution 70/205, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit as soon as possible, pursuant to paragraph 96 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled “The future we want”, an action plan for the United Nations Secretariat aimed at integrating sustainable development practices into its operations and facilities management, with the goal of ensuring that its operations and facilities management would have no negative impact on the climate. That significant mandate from Member States took into account the ongoing work led by UNEP in the context of the Sustainable United Nations initiative.

**D. Disasters and conflicts subprogramme**

**Resolution 70/195: Combating sand and dust storms**

50. Resolution 70/195 constituted one of the most significant innovations among the issues related to environmental sustainability and sustainable development on the agenda of the Second Committee of the General Assembly. Among other provisions, the General Assembly recognized that dust and sandstorms posed a great challenge to the sustainable development of affected countries and regions; acknowledged the role of the United Nations development system in promoting international cooperation to combat sand and dust storms; invited all relevant bodies, agencies, funds and programmes, including UNEP, to address the problem through various measures; and encouraged regional, subregional and interregional organizations and processes to continue to share best practices and promote regional cooperation.

51. Furthermore, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to circulate to the General Assembly at its seventy-first session the report entitled “Global assessment of sand and dust storms”, which is being prepared by UNEP in collaboration with other relevant United Nations entities, including the World Meteorological Organization and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa. Not only did the provision imply recognition of the ongoing endeavours of UNEP in that area, it also provided an example of the appropriate integration of the environmental pillar of the institutional framework of sustainable development into the work of the General Assembly by avoiding the duplication and juxtaposition of reporting mandates and acknowledging the role of the United Nations Environment Assembly.

52. It should also be noted that upon relevant consultation within the United Nations system UNEP provided, through its New York Office, the secretariat services and technical support required for the consideration of resolution 70/195 by Member States.

## **E. Chemicals and waste subprogramme**

### **Resolution 70/81: Effects of atomic radiation**

53. In its resolution 70/81, the General Assembly commended the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation for its valuable contribution to wider knowledge and understanding of the levels, effects and risks of exposure to ionizing radiation. In addition, the General Assembly requested UNEP to continue, within existing resources, to actively support the effective conduct of work of the Committee, and in that regard, encouraged UNEP to continue to maintain appropriate funding for the Scientific Committee, pursuant to paragraph 15 of resolution 69/84, as well as encouraging Member States to make voluntary contributions to the general trust fund established by the Executive Director of UNEP and also to make contributions in kind to support the work of the Scientific Committee.

## **F. Resource efficiency and sustainable consumption and production subprogramme**

### **1. Decision on the Board of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns**

54. In its decision A/70/411, the General Assembly welcomed the membership of the board, as nominated by the five regional groups of the United Nations and listed in the annex of the decision: Kenya and Nigeria (Africa); Indonesia and Republic of Korea (Asia-Pacific); Albania and Romania (Eastern Europe); Argentina and Mexico (Latin America and the Caribbean); and Germany and Turkey (Western European and other States). The Assembly also decided that the members of the Board would serve until 15 September 2017.

### **2. Resolutions on tourism**

55. During its seventieth session, the General Assembly reiterated the important role of sustainable tourism in sustainable development through the adoption of three related texts: resolution A/70/193 on the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, 2017; resolution 70/196 on sustainable tourism and sustainable development in Central America; and resolution 70/200 on the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism. In all three resolutions the Assembly recognized the role that sustainable tourism could play in sustainable development; acknowledged the efforts by United Nations entities, including UNEP, to promote sustainable tourism; and welcomed the launch of the sustainable tourism programme under the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns.

## **G. Regional activities**

### **Resolution 70/194: Oil slick on Lebanese shores**

56. Resolution 68/206, relevant to the disasters and conflicts subprogramme, was adopted by a vote of 171 in favour to 6 against, with 3 abstentions. In the resolution, the General Assembly recognized the multidimensionality of the adverse impact of the oil slick and, as it had in previous resolutions on the matter for consideration at previous sessions, requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the matter at its seventy-first session. The United Nations Development Programme prepared the most recent report of the Secretary-General on the oil slick, pursuant to previous resolutions and taking into account the initial assessment carried out by other entities of the United Nations system, including UNEP.

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