

2997 (XXVII). Institutional and financial arrangements for international environmental cooperation

The General Assembly,

Convinced of the need for prompt and effective implementation by Governments and the international community of measures designed to safeguard and enhance the environment for the benefit of present and future generations of man,

Recognizing that responsibility for action to protect and enhance the environment rests primarily with Governments and, in the first instance, can be exercised more effectively at the national and regional levels,

Recognizing further that environmental problems of broad international significance fall within the competence of the United Nations system,

Bearing in mind that international co-operative programmes in the field of the environment must be undertaken with due respect for the sovereign rights of States and in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations and principles of international law,

Mindful of the sectoral responsibilities of the organizations in the United Nations system,

Conscious of the significance of regional and subregional co-operation in the field of the environment and of the important role of the regional economic commissions and other regional intergovernmental organizations,

Emphasizing that problems of the environment constitute a new and important area for international cooperation and that the complexity and interdependence of such problems require new approaches,

Recognizing that the relevant international scientific and other professional communities can make an important contribution to international co-operation in the field of the environment,

Conscious of the need for processes within the United Nations system which would effectively assist developing countries to implement environmental policies and programmes that are compatible with their development plans and to participate meaningfully in international environmental programmes,

Convinced that, in order to be effective, international co-operation in the field of the environment requires additional financial and technical resources,

Aware of the urgent need for a permanent institutional arrangement within the United Nations system for the protection and improvement of the environment,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment,⁴²

⁴² A/8783 and Add. 1, Add.1/Corr.1 and Add.2.

I
GOVERNING COUNCIL OF THE UNITED NATIONS
ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

1. *Decides* to establish a Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme, composed of fifty-eight members elected by the General Assembly for three-year terms on the following basis:

- (a) Sixteen seats for African States;
- (b) Thirteen seats for Asian States;
- (c) Six seats for Eastern European States;
- (d) Ten seats for Latin American States;
- (e) Thirteen seats for Western European and other States;

2. *Decides* that the Governing Council shall have the following main functions and responsibilities:

- (a) To promote international co-operation in the field of the environment and to recommend, as appropriate, policies to this end;
- (b) To provide general policy guidance for the direction and co-ordination of environmental programmes within the United Nations system;
- (c) To receive and review the periodic reports of the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, referred to in section II, paragraph 2, below, on the implementation of environmental programmes within the United Nations system;
- (d) To keep under review the world environmental situation in order to ensure that emerging environmental problems of wide international significance receive appropriate and adequate consideration by Governments;
- (e) To promote the contribution of the relevant international scientific and other professional communities to the acquisition, assessment and exchange of environmental knowledge and information and, as appropriate, to the technical aspects of the formulation and implementation of environmental programmes within the United Nations system;
- (f) To maintain under continuing review the impact of national and international environmental policies and measures on developing countries, as well as the problem of additional costs that may be incurred by developing countries in the implementation of environmental programmes and projects, and to ensure that such programmes and projects shall be compatible with the development plans and priorities of those countries;
- (g) To review and approve annually the programme of utilization of resources of the Environment Fund referred to in section 111 below;

3. *Decides* that the Governing Council shall report annually to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council, which will transmit to the Assembly such comments on the report as it may deem necessary, particularly with regard to questions of co-ordination and to the relationship of environmental policies and programmes within the United Nations system to overall economic and social policies and priorities;

II
ENVIRONMENT SECRETARIAT

1. *Decides* that a small secretariat shall be established in the United Nations to serve as a focal point for environmental action and co-ordination within the United Nations system in such a way as to ensure a high degree of effective management;

2. *Decides* that the environment secretariat shall be headed by the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, who shall be elected by the General Assembly on the nomination, of the Secretary-General for a term of four years and who shall be entrusted, inter alia, with the following responsibilities:

- (a) To provide substantive support to the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme;
 - (b) To co-ordinate, under the guidance of the Governing Council, environmental programmes within the United Nations system, to keep their implementation under review and to assess their effectiveness;
 - (c) To advise, as appropriate and under the guidance of the Governing Council, intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations system on the formulation and implementation of environmental programmes;
 - (d) To secure the effective co-operation of, and contribution from, the relevant scientific and other professional communities in allparts of the world;
 - (e) To provide, at the request of all parties concerned, advisory services for the promotion of inter national co-operation in the field of the environment;
 - (f) To submit to the Governing Council, on his own initiative or upon request, proposals embodying medium-range and long-range planning for United Nations programmes in the field of the environment;
 - (g) To bring to the attention of the Governing Council any matter which he deems to require consideration by it;
 - (h) To administer, under the authority and policy guidance of the Governing Council, the Environment Fund referred to in section III below;
 - (i) To report on environmental matters to the Governing Council;
 - (j) To perform such other functions as may be entrusted to him by the Governing Council;
3. *Decides* that the costs of servicing the Governing Council and providing the small secretariat referred to in paragraph 1 above shall be borne by the regular budget of the United Nations and that operational programme costs, programme support and administrative costs of the Environment Fund established under section III below shall be borne by the Fund;

III ENVIRONMENT FUND

1. *Decides* that, in order to provide for additional financing for environmental programmes, a voluntary fund shall be established, with effect from 1 January 1..973, in accordance with existing United Nations financial procedures;
2. *Decides* that, in order to enable the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme to fulfil its policy guidance role for the direction and co-ordination of environmental activities, the Environment Fund shall finance wholly or partly the costs of the new environmental initiatives undertaken within the United Nations system which will include the initiatives envisaged in the Action Plan for the Human Environment⁴³ adopted by the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, with particular attention to integrated projects, and such other environmental activities as may be decided upon by the Governing Council and that the Governing Council shall review these initiatives with a view to taking appropriate decisions as to their continued financing;
3. *Decides* that the Environment Fund shall be used for financing such programmes of general interest as regional and global monitoring, assessment and data-collecting systems, including, as appropriate, costs for national counterparts; the improvement of environmental quality management; environmental research; information exchange and dissemination; public education and training; assistance for national, regional and global environmental institutions; the promotion of environmental research and studies for the development of industrial and other technologies best suited to a policy of economic growth compatible with adequate environmental safeguards; and such other programmes as the Governing Council may decide upon, and that in the implementation of such programmes due account should be taken of the special needs of the developing countries;

⁴³ A/CONF. 48/14 and Corr.I. chap. II.

4. *Decides* that, in order to ensure that the development priorities of developing countries shall not be adversely affected, adequate measures shall be taken to provide additional financial resources on terms compatible with the economic situation of the recipient developing country, and that, to this end, the Executive Director, in co-operation with competent organizations, shall keep this problem under continuing review;
5. *Decides* that the Environment Fund, in pursuance of the objectives stated in paragraphs 2 and 3 above, shall be directed to the need for effective co-ordination in the implementation of international environmental programmes of the organizations in the United Nations system and other international organizations;
6. *Decides* that, in the implementation of programmes to be financed by the Environment Fund, organizations outside the United Nations system, particularly those in the countries and regions concerned, shall also be utilized as appropriate, in accordance with the procedures established by the Governing Council, and that such organizations are invited to support the United Nations environmental programmes by complementary initiatives and contributions;
7. *Decides* that the Governing Council shall formulate such general procedures as are necessary to govern the operations of the Environment Fund;

IV ENVIRONMENT CO-ORDINATION BOARD

1. *Decides* that, in order to provide for the most efficient co-ordination of United Nations environmental programmes, an Environment Co-ordination Board, under the chairmanship of the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, shall be established under the auspices and within the framework of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination;
2. *Further decides* that the Environment Co-ordination Board shall meet periodically for the purpose of ensuring co-operation and co-ordination among all bodies concerned in the implementation of environmental programmes and that it shall report annually to the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme;
3. *Invites* the organizations of the United Nations system to adopt the measures that may be required to undertake concerted and co-ordinated programmes with regard to international environmental problems, taking into account existing procedures for prior consultation, particularly on programme and budgetary matters;
4. *Invites* the regional economic commissions and the United Nations Economic and Social Office at Beirut, in co-operation where necessary with other appropriate regional bodies, to intensify further their efforts directed towards contributing to the implementation of environmental programmes in view of the particular need for the rapid development of regional cooperation in this field;
5. *Also invites* other intergovernmental and those non-governmental organizations that have an interest in the field of the environment to lend their full support and collaboration to the United Nations with a view to achieving the largest possible degree of co-operation and co-ordination;
6. *Calls upon* Governments to ensure that appropriate national institutions shall be entrusted with the task of the co-ordination of environmental action, both national and international;
7. *Decides* to review as appropriate, at its thirty-first session, the above institutional arrangements, bearing in mind, inter alia, the responsibilities of the Economic and Social Council under the Charter of the United Nations.

2112th plenary meeting
15 December 1972

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At its 2112th plenary meeting, on 15 December 1972, the General Assembly, in pursuance of section 1, paragraph 1, of the above resolution, elected the fifty-eight members of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme.

The following States were elected: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Brazil, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Czechoslovakia, France, Gabon, German Democratic Republic, Germany, Federal Republic of, Ghana, Guatemala, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lebanon, Madagascar, Malawi, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Turkey, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Venezuela and Yugoslavia.

The General Assembly then selected by the drawing of lots the members of the Governing Council to serve for three years, for two years and for one year.

*As a result of the above election, the composition of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme for 1973 will be as follows: Argentina, * Australia, * * * Austria, * * Brazil ** Burundi *** Cameroon ** Canada * Central African Republic *** Chile, *** China, * Czechoslovakia, * France, * Gabon, * German Democratic Republic, * * * Germany, Federal Republic of, ** Ghana, * Guatemala, * Iceland, ** India, ** Indonesia, * Iran, ** Iraq, *** Italy'*** Jamaica, * Japan, ** Jordan, *** .Kenya, ** Kuwait, ** Lebanon, * Madagascar *** Malawi, ** Mexico, *** Morocco, * Netherlands, *** Nicaragua, *** Nigeria, *** Pakistan, *** Panama, *** Peru, ** Philippines, * Poland, *** Romania, ** Senegal, *** Sierra Leone, * Somalia, ** Spain, * Sri Lanka, *** Sudan, * Sweden, * Syrian Arab Republic, * Tunisia, ** Turkey, *** Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, * * United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, * * * United Republic of Tanzania, *** United States of America, * * Venezuela** and Yugoslavia.**

* Term of office expires on 31 December 1973.

** Term of office expires on 31 December 1974.

*** Term of office expires on 31 December 1975,

At the same meeting, in pursuance of section II, paragraph 2, of the above resolution, the General Assembly, on the nomination of the Secretary-General⁴⁴, elected Mr. Maurice F. STRONG Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme.

⁴⁴ See A/8965