

The draft outline of the report on the progress in the implementation of subparagraphs (a) to (h) of paragraph 88 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled “The future we want”

This report, prepared in response to the UN Environment Assembly resolution 3/11, *Implementation of paragraph 88(a)-(h) of the outcome document of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled “The future we want”*, presents information on the progress in the implementation of subparagraphs (a) to (h) of paragraph 88 of the outcome document. In addition to the information on the action taken or planned in that regard, it highlights the challenges faced and lessons learned, as well as opportunities for further strengthening the role of the UN Environment Programme as the leading global environmental authority, with a view to strengthening international environmental governance within the context of the institutional framework for sustainable development.

I. Introduction

The UN Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012, adopted, in its resolution 1 of 22 June 2012, the outcome document, entitled “The future we want”. The General Assembly, in its resolution 66/288 of 27 July 2012, endorsed the outcome document.

In Part IV (entitled “Institutional framework for sustainable development”), Section C (entitled “Environmental pillar in the context of sustainable development”), paragraph 87 of the outcome document, the Heads of State and Government and high-level representatives reaffirmed the need to strengthen international environmental governance within the context of the institutional framework for sustainable development in order to promote a balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, as well as coordination within the UN system.

In paragraph 88 of the outcome document, the world leaders stressed as follows:

“We are committed to strengthening the role of the UN Environment Programme as the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the UN system and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment. We reaffirm General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972 establishing the UN Environment Programme and other relevant resolutions that reinforce its mandate, as well as the Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of the UN Environment Programme of 7 February 1997 and the Malmö Ministerial Declaration of 31 May 2000. In this regard, we invite the Assembly, at its sixty- seventh session, to adopt a resolution strengthening and upgrading the UN Environment Programme in the following manner:

(a) Establish universal membership in the Governing Council of the UN Environment Programme, as well as other measures to strengthen its governance as well as its responsiveness and accountability to Member States;

(b) Have secure, stable, adequate and increased financial resources from the regular budget of the UN and voluntary contributions to fulfil its mandate;

(c) Enhance the voice of the UN Environment Programme and its ability to fulfil its coordination mandate within the UN system by strengthening its engagement in key UN coordination bodies and empowering it to lead efforts to formulate UN system-wide strategies on the environment;

(d) Promote a strong science-policy interface, building on existing international instruments, assessments, panels and information networks, including the Global Environment Outlook, as one of the processes aimed at bringing together information and assessment to support informed decision-making;

(e) Disseminate and share evidence-based environmental information, and raise public awareness on critical, as well as emerging, environmental issues;

(f) Provide capacity-building to countries, as well as support, and facilitate access to technology;

(g) Progressively consolidate headquarters functions in Nairobi, as well as strengthen its regional presence, in order to assist countries, upon request, in the implementation of their national environmental policies, collaborating closely with other relevant entities of the UN system;

(h) Ensure the active participation of all relevant stakeholders, drawing on best practices and models from relevant multilateral institutions and exploring new mechanisms to promote transparency and the effective engagement of civil society.

Subsequently, the General Assembly, in paragraph 4 of its resolution 67/213 of 21 December 2012, decided:

“To strengthen and upgrade the UN Environment Programme in the manner set out in subparagraphs (a) to (h) of paragraph 88 of the outcome document of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled “The future we want”, as endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 66/288 of 27 July 2012;” and

“To establish universal membership in the Governing Council of the UN Environment Programme, and mandates it, as from its first universal session to be held in Nairobi in February 2013, using its applicable rules of procedure and applicable rules and practices of the General Assembly, pending the adoption of its new rules of procedure, to expeditiously initiate the implementation of the provisions contained in paragraph 88 of the outcome document in their entirety, make a recommendation on its designation to reflect its universal character and decide on future arrangements for the Global Ministerial Environment Forum”.

At its first universal session held in February 2013, the Governing Council of the UN Environment Programme adopted decision 27/2, by which it decided on measures to implement paragraph 88 of the outcome document, together with its recommendation to the General Assembly to change its designation and its decision to discontinue the Global Ministerial Environment Forum. In response to that recommendation, the General Assembly, in its resolution 67/251 of 13 March 2013, decided to change the designation of the “Governing Council of the UN Environment Programme” to the “UN Environment Assembly of the UN Environment Programme”.

The UN Environment Assembly, in resolution 3/11 of 6 December 2017, among other things, recalled its strong commitment to the full implementation of paragraph 88, subparagraphs (a) to (h) of the outcome document, and requested the Executive Director to provide regular briefings to the Committee of Permanent Representatives on progress in its implementation.

II. Progress in the implementation of subparagraphs (a) to (h) of paragraph 88 of the outcome document

A. Governance - *paragraph 88 (a)*

This section covers the implementation of subparagraph (a) of paragraph 88 of the outcome document, which reads:

“Establish universal membership in the Governing Council of the UN Environment Programme, as well as other measures to strengthen its governance as well as its responsiveness and accountability to Member States”

The General Assembly, in its resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972 establishing the UN Environment Programme, defined the governance structure of the Programme, including its governing body, the “Governing Council” with its 58 members elected by the General Assembly for the three-year terms. During consideration among Member States on ways and means to strengthen international environmental governance and the UN Environment Programme, the question of establishing universal membership in its governing body was identified as an “important and complex issue” as contained in Governing Council decision SS.VII/1, entitled “international environmental governance”, of 15 February 2002. During the next ten years that followed, the issues of whether to establish universal membership had been debated at a series of sessions of the General Assembly and the governing body of the UN Environment Programme. Paragraph 88 (a) of the outcome document was a culmination of that process. In December 2012, the General Assembly, in its resolution 67/213, decided to establish universal membership in the Governing Council of the UN Environment Programme whose designation was changed to the UN Environment Assembly of the UN Environment Programme by the General Assembly in its resolution 67/251 in March 2013.

The General Assembly, in its resolution of 67/213, mandated the Governing Council of the UN Environment Programme, as from its first universal session held in Nairobi in February 2013, to expeditiously initiate the implementation of the provisions contained in paragraph 88 of the outcome document in their entirety. In pursuance of that resolution, the first universal session of the Governing Council adopted decision 27/2 of 22 February 2013, entitled “Implementation of paragraph 88 of the outcome document of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development”. Those measures contained in that decision, included, among others, the following:

- Convening sessions of the governing body of the UN Environment Programme in Nairobi on a biennial basis (paragraph 3);
- A two-day high level segment at the concluding part of each session of the governing body as its integral part, to take strategic decisions and provide political guidance (paragraph 5);
- The Bureau of the governing body to be composed of 10 members (paragraph 6);
- Ensuring the active participation of all relevant stakeholders (paragraph 7);
- An open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives being the intersessional subsidiary body of the governing body (paragraph 9);
- Convening an open-ended meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (paragraph 10);
- Establishment of a subcommittee of the Committee of Permanent Representatives that will meet annually (paragraph 11).

With regard to the questions of responsiveness, the Governing Council, in decision 27/2, paragraph 18, invited the Executive Director to continue improving the timeliness and responsiveness to the needs and requests by Member States and recalled the relevant provisions of paragraph 13 of its decision 19/32. Also, in its decision 27/2, paragraph 17, the Governing Council decided to enhance transparency and openness in its work and in this regard requests the Executive Director to establish a written access-to-information policy.

Including the follow-up on the above, this report presents information on ensuing developments concerning the implementation of subparagraph (a) of paragraph 88 of the outcome document.

B. Financial resources - *paragraph 88 (b)*

This section covers the implementation of subparagraph (b) of paragraph 88 of the outcome document, which reads as follows:

“Have secure, stable, adequate and increased financial resources from the regular budget of the UN and voluntary contributions to fulfil its mandate”

The General Assembly, in paragraph 5 of its resolution 67/213 of 21 December 2012, recalled the decision to have secure, stable, adequate and increased financial resources from the regular budget of the UN and voluntary contributions to fulfil the mandate of the UN Environment Programme, and requested the Secretary-General, in line with paragraph 88 (b) of the outcome document, to reflect in the budget proposal for the biennium 2014–2015 resources that take into account the proposed revised programme of work of the UN Environment Programme and the implementation of paragraph 88, subparagraphs (a) to (h), of the outcome document, as well as opportunities for increasing the efficient use of resources. The General Assembly urged donors to increase voluntary funding to the UN Environment Programme, including to the Environment Fund. Furthermore, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to maintain the resource needs from the regular budget of the UN for the UN Environment Programme under review, in the light of the implementation of paragraph 88 of the outcome document, in accordance with UN budgetary practices.

The first universal session of the Governing Council of the UN Environment Programme, in paragraph 19 of decision 27/2, stressed the need by no later than 2016 to implement the provisions of paragraph 88 (b) of the outcome document and requested the Executive Director to report thereon.

Including the ensuing developments following the above-mentioned resolution/decision, it will presents information on the financial resources required to fulfil the role and mandate of the UN Environment Programme as envisaged in paragraph 88 of the outcome document and set out in its programme of work, and the actual state of the financial resources made available to it through the UN regular budget and voluntary contributions, including the Environment Fund, especially for the period from 2013 to 2017, since the General Assembly, in paragraph 4 of resolution 67/213, decided to strengthen and upgrade the UN Environment Programme in the manner set out in subparagraphs (a) to (h) of paragraph 88 of the outcome document.

It will be highlighted against the backdrop of the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, the decisions/resolutions of the governing body of the UN Environment Programme, and the action taken by the Secretary-General and by the Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme.

C. Coordination of the UN system - *paragraph 88 (c)*

This section covers the implementation of subparagraph (c) of paragraph 88 of the outcome document, which reads as follows:

“Enhance the voice of the UN Environment Programme and its ability to fulfil its coordination mandate within the UN system by strengthening its engagement in key UN coordination bodies and empowering it to lead efforts to formulate UN system-wide strategies on the environment”.

It should be recalled that the coordination mandate of the UN Environment Programme within the UN system arises from its mandate set out in General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972, which covers the intergovernmental aspects as well as the inter-agency aspects of coordination. The main functions and responsibilities of the UN Environment Assembly, as set out in part I of that General Assembly resolution, include, inter alia, to “provide general policy guidance for the direction and coordination of environmental programmes within the UN system”, and as a basis for its decision-making, to “receive and review the periodic reports of the Executive Director on the implementation of environmental programmes within the UN system.”

In part II of the same resolution, the Executive Director, as the head of the UN Environment secretariat, is entrusted with the responsibilities, inter alia: to coordinate, under the guidance of the UN Environment Assembly, environmental programmes within the UN system to keep their implementation under review and to assess their effectiveness; to advise, as appropriate and under the guidance of the UN Environment Assembly, intergovernmental bodies of the UN system on the formulation and implementation of environmental programmes; and to submit to the UN Environment Assembly, on his/her own initiative or upon request, proposals embodying medium-range and long-range planning for UN programmes in the field of the environment.

The above mentioned coordination mandate of the UN Environment Programme, as contained in General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII) by which the Programme was established, provides the basis for fulfilling its role envisaged in paragraph 88 (c) and enabling it to promote the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the UN system. Other resolutions have reinforced that mandate.

This section, taking into account the relevant legislative mandates of the UN Environment Programme, will highlight the progress in the implementation of paragraph 88 (c) of the outcome document, focusing both on the intergovernmental aspects of coordination between the governing bodies of the relevant UN system organizations and the UN Environment Programme, as well as the inter-agency coordination, including through the Environmental Management Group and other relevant coordination bodies.

It will be highlighted against the important policy developments in recent years, such as the adoption and implementation of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goals, and the UN system-wide framework for strategies on the environment.

The state of the work of the Environmental Management Group will be updated in connection with the above.

D. Science-policy interface - *paragraph 88 (d)*

This section covers the implementation of subparagraph (d) of paragraph 88 of the outcome document, which reads as follows:

“Promote a strong science-policy interface, building on existing international instruments, assessments, panels and information networks, including the Global Environment Outlook, as one of the processes aimed at bringing together information and assessment to support informed decision-making”

It should be recalled that the promotion of a science-policy interface arises from the main functions of the UN Environment Assembly as stipulated in part I of General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972, including its responsibilities 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”, which enables the Environment Assembly to carry out other responsibilities to “promote international cooperation in the field of the environment and to recommend, as appropriate, policies to this end” and to “provide general policy guidance for the direction and coordination of environmental programmes within the UN system.” It is supported by its function 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 UN system.”

In other words, promoting a strong science-policy interface at the UN Environment Programme underpins the functioning of the UN Environment Assembly to set the global environmental agenda.

The first universal session of the Governing Council, in paragraph 8 of its decision 27/2, decided that the governing body of the UN Environment Programme will promote a strong science-

policy interface by reviewing the state of the environment, by building on existing international instruments, assessments, panels and information networks, including through an enhanced summary for policy makers of the Global Environment Outlook and, in this regard, requests the Executive Director to identify critical gaps and present a report, with recommendations, to the governing body.

The General Assembly, in paragraph 10 of its resolution 68/215 of 20 December 2013, reiterated the continuing need for the UN Environment Programme to conduct up-to-date, comprehensive, scientifically based and policy-relevant global environmental assessments, in close consultation with Member States, in order to support decision-making processes at all levels.

The UN Environment Assembly, during its three consecutive sessions, had been seized with aspects of science-policy interface, as demonstrated in its resolutions on relevant subjects.

This section provides the updates of ensuing developments on the subject following the above, including the Global Environment Outlook process.

E. Environmental information and awareness-raising - *paragraph 88 (e)*

This section covers the implementation of subparagraph (e) of paragraph 88 of the outcome document, which reads as follows:

“Disseminate and share evidence-based environmental information, and raise public awareness on critical, as well as emerging, environmental issues”.

The above is closely related to the promotion of a strong science-policy interface, and is a means for the UN Environment Programme to strengthen its role as an authoritative advocate for the global environment.

It provides updates on action taken by the UN Environment Programme at the intergovernmental and interagency levels, as well as part of capacity-building to support countries, and for public awareness-raising and campaigns on emerging and important issues.

F. Capacity-building and technology support - *paragraph 88 (f)*

This section covers the implementation of subparagraph (f) of paragraph 88 of the outcome document, which reads as follows:

“Provide capacity-building to countries, as well as support, and facilitate access to technology”

The first universal session of the Governing Council, in paragraph 20 of decision 27/2, decided to implement paragraph 88 (f) of the outcome document and, in this context, requested the Executive Director to enhance the operationalization of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building.

The General Assembly, in paragraph 15 of its resolution 68/215 of 20 December 2013, reiterated that capacity-building and technology support to developing countries in environment-related fields are important components of the work of the UN Environment Programme, and in this regard called for the continued and focused implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building, adopted by the Programme.

It will provide information on UN Environment Programme’s activities taken in the past five years and those planned in the near future with respect to capacity-building and technology support, including enhancing the operationalization of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-Building.

G. Consolidation of headquarters functions and strengthening regional presence - *paragraph 88 (g)*

This section covers the implementation of subparagraph (g) of paragraph 88 of the outcome document, which reads as follows:

“Progressively consolidate headquarters functions in Nairobi, as well as strengthen its regional presence, in order to assist countries, upon request, in the implementation of their national environmental policies, collaborating closely with other relevant entities of the UN system”

Consolidation of headquarters functions in Nairobi

The first universal session of the Governing Council of the UN Environment Programme, in paragraph 13 of decision 27/2, committed to progressively consolidate headquarters functions of the UN Environment Programme in Nairobi and in this context requested the Executive Director to present a report to the governing body at its next session and to include recommendations in the programme of work for the period 2016–2017 to be acted upon and implemented in a timely manner.

On a related matter, the General Assembly, in a series of its recent resolutions, reiterated the importance of the Nairobi headquarters location of the UN Environment Programme, and requested the Secretary-General to keep the resource needs of the Programme and the UN Office at Nairobi under review so as to permit the delivery, in an effective manner, of necessary services to the Programme and to the other UN organizations and entities in Nairobi.

Updates on the action on the subject taken by the Executive Director since the adoption of the above-mentioned Governing Council decision 27/2 in February 2013, including the recommendations in the relevant programmes of work, as well as a further way forward, will be presented in this report.

Strengthening the UN Environment Programme’s regional presence

The Governing Council, in paragraph 14 of decision 27/2, decided to strengthen the UN Environment Programme’s regional presence in order to assist countries in the implementation of their national environmental programmes, policies and plans and in this regard requested the Executive Director to increase the Programme participation in UN country teams.

This aspect of strengthening the UN Environment Programme closely relates to its strengthening in the provision of its support to countries for capacity-building and technology support, as called for in subparagraph (f) of paragraph 88 of the outcome document.

This section will present the updates on the action taken or planned on this subject by the Executive Director.

H. Stakeholders' participation and engagement of civil society - *paragraph 88 (h)*

This section covers the implementation of subparagraph (h) of paragraph 88 of the outcome document, which reads:

“Ensure the active participation of all relevant stakeholders, drawing on best practices and models from relevant multilateral institutions and exploring new mechanisms to promote transparency and the effective engagement of civil society.

While the implementation of the above subparagraph relates to various aspects of the ways in which the UN Environment Programme discharge its functions, this report will present in particular the status of the implementation of relevant measures set out in Governing Council decision 27/2, paragraph 7, through which the governing body would ensure the active participation of all relevant stakeholders, particularly those from developing countries, drawing on best practices and models from relevant multilateral institutions, and explore new mechanisms to promote transparency and the effective engagement of civil society in its work and that of its subsidiary bodies.

In the context above, the information on the following will be updated: a process for stakeholder accreditation and participation; mechanisms and rules for stakeholders' expert input and advice; and working methods and processes for informed discussions and contributions by all relevant stakeholders, including the private sector, towards the intergovernmental decision-making process.

III. Conclusion

This section will provide analytical assessment of the status of the implementation of the entirety of subparagraphs (a) to (h) of paragraph 88 of the outcome document of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development.

It will include the progresses achieved, challenges faced and lessons learned, and opportunities and a way forward for full implementation of subparagraphs (a) to (h) of paragraph 88, with a view to ensuring that the UN Environment Programme effectively plays the role of the leading global environmental authority, and carries out its responsibilities in accordance with its mandate, so as to enhance the effectiveness of international environmental governance and the institutional framework for sustainable development.