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Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme

Twelfth special session of the Governing Council/
Global Ministerial Environment Forum
Nairobi, 20–22 February 2012

Proceedings of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its twelfth special session

Introduction

1. The twelfth special session of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum was held in Nairobi from 20 to 22 February 2012. It was convened in pursuance of section I of Governing Council decision 26/17 and paragraph 5 of General Assembly resolution 40/243 on the pattern of conferences, and in accordance with rules 5 and 6 of the rules of procedure of the Governing Council.

I. Opening of the session

2. The twelfth special session was opened at 10.35 a.m. on Monday, 20 February 2012, by a representative of the secretariat who served as master of ceremonies.
3. The session began with the performance by a group of children from a number of Kenyan schools of “I have a dream”, a song written by the Swedish group Abba in 1972, the year in which UNEP was founded.
4. Opening statements were made by Ms. Graciela Muslera, Minister of Housing, Land Planning and Environment of Uruguay and Acting President of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum; Ms. Amina Mohamed, Deputy Executive Director of UNEP, on behalf of Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General; Mr. Joan Clos, Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat); Ms. Sahle-Work Zewde, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Nairobi; Mr. Henri Djombo, Minister of Sustainable Development, Forestry and the Environment of the Congo, on behalf of Mr. Denis Sassou N’Guesso, President of the Congo, who was unable to attend the session; Mr. Achim Steiner, Executive Director of UNEP; and Mr. Mwai Kibaki, President of Kenya.
5. Ms. Muslera, in her statement, expressed appreciation to the Executive Director and the secretariat for their efforts and determination to speak for the environment around the world at a decisive moment in history and to demonstrate to Governments and all sectors of society that it was possible to halt environmental degradation and build a more sustainable future. On the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of UNEP, she also acknowledged the role of the former executive directors of UNEP who were present at the event and whose ideas and vision had made UNEP what it was.
6. Turning to the challenges facing the world’s economies and the alarming rates of environmental degradation, she said that new concepts based on the sustainability of natural resources could strengthen economic systems, creating new jobs and opportunities for growth. Emphasizing the urgency of the situation, she said that the world was looking to UNEP for guidance and direction and that it was vital to seize the opportunity presented by the forthcoming United Nations Conference on

Sustainable Development, to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, to step up efforts and find new and innovative ways of responding to the growing challenges. Important debates had been taking place on the two core themes of the Conference, the green economy and the institutional framework for sustainable development, and she applauded the leadership of UNEP in those areas. She highlighted the challenges posed to the environment by chemicals and wastes and the efforts made by her country to meet them, saying that they should not be overlooked in the debates leading up to the Conference. As the current session of the Council/Forum was the last opportunity for environment ministers to influence the Conference and its outcome, she urged all participants to speak with one voice on the need for a stronger institutional framework for sustainable development and for environmental governance within that context.

7. In his statement, the Secretary-General highlighted the importance of advancing the sustainable development agenda at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and the significance of the current juncture of the fortieth anniversary of UNEP and the forthcoming Conference. He had made sustainable development a priority of his tenure because it was essential to the well-being of the world's population, and the Conference afforded an opportunity to set the planet on a sustainable path. While emphasizing the challenges ahead, he called upon environment ministers to carry a clear, practical and transformational message to the Conference based on science and the needs of future generations and to put forward bold solutions to achieve the future to which all aspired.

8. Mr. Clos, in his statement, recalled the decisions to locate both UNEP and UN-Habitat in Nairobi in recognition of the fact that Africa faced many environmental challenges and that the mandates of the two organizations were closely intertwined. Against the backdrop of rapid urban expansion on the continent, collaboration between the two organizations had never been greater in areas such as low-carbon building practices, urban mobility and public transportation. He also cited examples of cooperation over a number of years on climate change and joint work on the green economy, with analysis carried out by the two organizations being used at the national and local levels in decision-making on the environment and urban planning and gaining increasing international recognition. The environmental degradation resulting from growing slums and congestion could be addressed only by making cities work better on the basis of the three pillars of sustainable development. He congratulated UNEP on its fortieth anniversary, saying that it had provided strong global leadership in safeguarding the environment.

9. In her statement, Ms. Zewde thanked the President and people of Kenya for hosting the United Nations Office at Nairobi and the two headquarters of UNEP and UN-Habitat so generously, as manifested in the magnificent site of the offices, the security provided and the critical role played by the representative of Kenya at the General Assembly in securing adequate resources for the Office. Recalling the establishment of the Office and its development, she expressed her determination to fulfil her mandate as the first incumbent of the newly created post of Director-General. Given the global financial crisis, the role of the Office as custodian and manager of the resources of UNEP and UN-Habitat was more justified than ever, but there were legitimate expectations on the part of member States that efficiency and the elimination of duplication should be achieved. Following the agenda set by the Secretary-General, she pledged to streamline the Office's work and make better use of services, according priority to areas identified in reviews and audits as requiring immediate reform or strengthening. The Office would strive to continue to serve as a common umbrella for the activities of the United Nations in Kenya, to strengthen its liaison with the Government of Kenya and to reach out to the public regarding the United Nations in Kenya and on the continent.

10. In his statement, Mr. Sassou N'Gusso paid tribute to two outstanding Kenyans, Mr. Jomo Kenyatta and Ms. Wangari Maathai, for their vision and leadership and their actions in support of UNEP and the environment. He also acknowledged the admirable progress made by UNEP since its formation in 1972, notably in supporting member States in capacity-building and preparing frameworks for environmental management, planning and legislation and in contributing to the debate on many new and emerging issues.

11. Turning to the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, he noted that at the eighteenth ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, held in Addis Ababa in January 2012, African States had adopted a common position for the Conference. Africa supported the green economy as a path for development affording opportunities for economic diversification, the creation of decent jobs and combating poverty. Africa also recognized the need to strengthen international environmental governance and promote the balanced integration of the three pillars of sustainable development. Favourable conditions and a healthy environment for business were needed for the emergence of green growth, and there was concern that developed countries would use the current financial and economic crises as a pretext for renegeing on commitments made to developing countries. Africa did not want to see the forthcoming

Conference end in unrealized promises, and the continent remained open to constructive dialogue with other regions and organizations to achieve consensus and responsible resolutions.

12. The Executive Director, in his statement, welcomed the former executive directors present on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of UNEP. The current session afforded an opportunity both to take stock of the past 40 years and to prepare for the Conference on Sustainable Development and ensure meaningful and decisive outcomes. UNEP had neither the time nor the resources for grand celebrations of its anniversary but had marked the occasion with exhibitions of photographs and a guide to the trees on the compound presented over the years by world leaders and personalities. Looking back over the past 40 years of UNEP and 20 years of sustainable development, there were many accomplishments to be proud of, but at the same time there was much cause for concern with the current state of the world. He thanked the Government of Kenya for hosting UNEP for four decades, for supporting the organization through difficult periods and for inspiring others by supporting the transition to a green economy with some of the boldest policies in Africa.

13. In his statement, Mr. Kibaki heralded the current session as an important milestone both as the anniversary of UNEP and as the last global gathering of environment ministers before the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, affording a unique opportunity to build consensus and determine the outcome of the Conference. Cautioning that environmental degradation continued to limit development options in many countries and even threatened to reverse gains made in poverty eradication and sustainable development, he called for the intensification of efforts to achieve environmental conservation. Kenya had embraced green growth as a national priority to guide future development and achieve climate resilience, encourage accelerated economic development, address poverty eradication and improve social welfare. Green development, however, called for strong institutions and reforms in international environmental governance. For that reason the African Union had adopted a common position in support of transforming UNEP into a specialized agency based in Nairobi, and he called upon the Council/Forum to support the African position. Furthermore, the Council/Forum should seek the elevation of the Global Ministerial Environment Forum to a global authoritative voice on environmental sustainability and a link between global environmental policymaking and global environmental financing.

II. Organization of work

A. Adoption of the agenda

14. At its 1st plenary meeting, on the morning of Monday, 20 February 2012, the Council/Forum adopted the following agenda for the session, on the basis of the provisional agenda (UNEP/GCSS.XII/1):

1. Opening of the session.
2. Organization of work:
 - (a) Adoption of the agenda;
 - (b) Election of officers;
 - (c) Organization of work.
3. Credentials of representatives.
4. Emerging policy issues: environment and development.
5. Other matters.
6. Adoption of the report.
7. Closure of the session.

B. Election of officers

15. The term of Hungary as a member of the Governing Council expired on 1 January 2012. As the representative of Hungary had served as Vice-President of the Governing Council, the seat of the Eastern European States fell vacant on that date. Accordingly, at the opening meeting of the special session, on 20 February 2012, the Council/Forum elected Mr. László Borbély (Romania) Vice-President pursuant to rules 18 and 19 of its rules of procedure.

16. In addition, Ms. Rosa Aguilar Rivero (Spain) and Ms. Liana Bratasida (Indonesia) had, since their election at the twenty-sixth session of the Council/Forum, vacated their positions as President and Vice-President of the Bureau, respectively. Accordingly, the Western European and other States

nominated Mr. Federico Ramos de Armas (Spain) to serve as President and the Asian and Pacific States nominated Mr. Dana A. Kartakusuma (Indonesia) to serve as Vice-President to complete the terms of Ms. Rivero and Ms. Bratasida.

17. All three officers were elected by acclamation to serve until the twenty-seventh regular session of the Council/Forum, to be held in 2013.

18. In his acceptance speech, the President said that he was honoured to be entrusted with such an important responsibility in the lead-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, which would shape the debate on environment and sustainable development for decades to come. The preparatory process under way afforded a unique opportunity to influence discussions at the Conference and its outcomes, and he urged representatives to use the current session to deepen efforts in that regard. He underscored his commitment to ensuring that policymakers, civil society, the scientific community and the wider global community were kept abreast of the environmental challenges facing the world. Much was known about the magnitude of the multifaceted challenges facing the international community, and it was generally recognized that natural resources were finite and that economic models were required that would boost economic growth and create jobs while protecting the environment. Providing the Earth's people with the means for a dignified life without compromising the health of the environment was within reach; 2012 could and should be a landmark year in defining the global response to the challenge of sustainability.

19. On the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of UNEP, he expressed gratitude to its current and former executive directors, paying tribute to their leadership, commitment and dedication. He expressed appreciation to civil society for its role in helping UNEP to become the United Nations voice for the environment and disseminating its messages far and wide. Civil society participation was crucial to attaining sustainable development for all, as were initiatives fostering and promoting cooperation between countries. The numerous important achievements of UNEP notwithstanding, many challenges remained, as evidenced by the fifth Global Environment Outlook assessment report. In closing, he commended the Executive Director on his steadfast advancement of the UNEP agenda and tireless efforts to assist member States in identifying viable options for an international framework for sustainable development.

C. Organization of work

20. At its 1st plenary meeting, the Council/Forum considered and approved the organization of work of the session in the light of the recommendations contained in the annotations to the agenda (UNEP/GCSS.XII/1/Add.1/Rev.1).

21. Pursuant to one of those recommendations, it was decided that the Council/Forum would hold ministerial consultations from the afternoon of Monday, 20 February, until the morning of Wednesday, 22 February, under agenda item 4 (emerging policy issues: environment and development). The focus of those consultations would be on the theme "The environmental agenda in the changing world: from Stockholm (1972) to Rio (2012)", with three sub-themes: "Environmental change and global response in 2012", "The green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication" and "The institutional framework for sustainable development". The consultations would conclude with discussions on the topic "Rio+20 and beyond: responding to the challenges". It was agreed that the ministerial consultations would comprise a blend of plenary meetings, panel discussions and ministerial round-table discussions.

22. The Council/Forum also decided to establish a committee of the whole, to be chaired by Mr. László Borbély (Romania), which would consider agenda items 4 and 5. The Council/Forum also decided to establish a friends of the President group.

23. It was further agreed that the Council/Forum would consider agenda items 3 (credentials of representatives), 6 (adoption of the report) and 7 (closure of the session) during the plenary meeting on the afternoon of Wednesday, 22 February.

24. The Council/Forum agreed that the session would be conducted in what was termed a "papersmart" format, with documents made available electronically and in a limited number of paper copies.

D. Attendance

25. The following States members of the Governing Council were represented at the session:¹ Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Cuba, Czech Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Fiji, France, Georgia, Germany, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Liberia, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mexico, Mozambique, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Spain, Sudan, Switzerland, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Zambia.
26. The following States not members of the Governing Council but Members of the United Nations or members of a specialized agency or of the International Atomic Energy Agency were represented by observers: Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Armenia, Austria, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Comoros, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cyprus, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Finland, Gambia, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Holy See, Honduras, Iraq, Ireland, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Libya, Mali, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Namibia, Nepal, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Oman, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Samoa, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.
27. Palestine was also in attendance as an observer.
28. The following United Nations bodies, secretariat units and convention secretariats were represented: secretariat of the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement, secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat, Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, International Ecosystem Management Partnership, secretariat of the Agreement on the Conservation of Populations of European Bats, secretariat of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, secretariat of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, secretariat of the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol, secretariat of the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, secretariat of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, secretariat of the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, Economic Commission for Africa.
29. The following specialized agencies were represented: International Civil Aviation Organization, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, United Nations Population Fund, World Food Programme, World Meteorological Organization.
30. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented: African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States, African Development Bank, African Union Commission, Asian Development Bank, Commonwealth Secretariat, Economic Community of West African States Commission, European Union, Global Environment Facility, Intergovernmental Authority on Development, International Atomic Energy Agency, International Organization for Migration, International Renewable Energy Agency, International Union for Conservation of Nature, League of Arab States, New Partnership for Africa's Development, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, World Bank.
31. In addition, a number of non-governmental and civil society organizations were represented by observers.
32. A full list of participants was made available as document UNEP/GCSS.XII/INF/11.

¹ The current membership of the Governing Council was determined by elections held on 3 November 2009, at the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly, and on 17 November and 12 December 2011, at the sixty-sixth session of the Assembly.

E. Policy statement by the Executive Director

33. In his policy statement, the Executive Director stressed that in its 40-year history of tackling environmental sustainability in the context of sustainable development, UNEP had moved from simply responding to environmental crises to setting the agenda and thus providing a foundation for sustainable development and its social, economic and environmental pillars. The forthcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, whose main objective was the reaffirmation of global commitment to sustainable development, would take place against a backdrop of considerable financial uncertainty and disruption whose reverberations were being felt around the world and would make confronting sustainable development in 2012 particularly challenging. UNEP had long been engaged in exploring sustainable development, but the fundamental challenges of equity and sustainability continued to threaten the future of humankind. Considerable success in the creation of environmental institutions, legislation and processes and the development of creative and innovative solutions to environmental challenges notwithstanding, future generations faced reduced prosperity if solutions were not found.

34. He drew attention to the proliferation of multilateral environmental agreements, which bore testimony to a step-by-step approach to environmental issues. UNEP was deeply engaged in efforts to better that approach by engaging the wider United Nations system; the many successes notwithstanding, however, there remained a need to achieve the genuine mainstreaming of the environment into social, economic and political decision-making, as well as tangible action and transformation rather than rhetoric. He underscored the importance to that end of partnership with civil society and major groups.

35. Despite the uncertain financial situation, 2011 had seen the medium-term strategy being fully implemented through the programme of work and a priority focus on results-based management. Of 21 expected accomplishments, 15 had been fully achieved, 5 had been partially achieved and 1 had been insufficiently achieved. For the first time, UNEP was able to provide far greater clarity in performance reporting owing to its wide-ranging internal reforms and reorganization. He drew attention to various successful activities under the six UNEP subprogrammes, including publications such as the *Emissions Gap Report* and *Towards a Green Economy: Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication*, which had been widely used as reference materials in international forums and triggered significant debate around the world. The fifth Global Environment Outlook assessment report would be launched in June, providing an up-to-date assessment of the state of the world's environment. In testimony to its relevance, the green economy report had proved to be the most downloaded report in UNEP history, with over 2 million downloads from the UNEP website to date. In the context of the disasters and conflicts subprogramme, he drew particular attention to a report on an environmental assessment by UNEP of Ogoniland, Nigeria, which presented an in-depth history of a tragic conflict that had remained unresolved for more than three decades. He urged member States to keep abreast of that dramatic situation.

36. Turning to the organization's financial situation, he said that managing UNEP in times of uncertainty had proved a tremendous challenge, given that some 96 per cent of its funding depended on voluntary contributions. The precautionary approach adopted in response to the financial crisis had proved effective. While there had been a shortfall of some 9 per cent in income from the Environment Fund, an increase in extrabudgetary contributions had exceeded expectations. While that increase represented a positive reflection of member States' confidence in the work of UNEP, it was not optimal, as most voluntary contributions were earmarked for specific activities, projects or regions. UNEP had taken the financial crisis extremely seriously; among other measures to lower costs, the reduction of 58 staff positions, although pragmatic, had hampered the implementation of the programme of work.

37. It was to be hoped that member States would derive a sense of accomplishment from UNEP performance on the environmental dimension of sustainable development; in 2012 the organization was evolving rapidly, clearly delivering results under its six subprogrammes and placing greater emphasis on the science-policy interface. Calling for transformative initiatives to tackle unprecedented environmental changes, some of which were on the verge of irreversibility, he urged member States to respond in Rio de Janeiro to the expectations of the global community or risk its loss of faith in multilateralism and in the United Nations as a platform for delivering results.

38. Following the Executive Director's policy statement, the Council/Forum heard statements from the representatives of Switzerland; Denmark, on behalf of the European Union and its member States; Ecuador; India; Brazil; and South Africa, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

39. The representative of Switzerland congratulated the President on his election and UNEP on its fortieth anniversary. He introduced a conference room paper containing a draft declaration on UNEP

at 40, which, he said, represented a clear message from ministers of environment in the lead-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, reaffirming their commitment to sustainable development and its environmental dimension and raising the profile of UNEP in its fortieth anniversary year.

40. The representative of Denmark, speaking on behalf of the European Union and its member States, welcomed Ms. Mohamed to her post as Deputy Executive Director of UNEP and expressed thanks to the Executive Director for his invaluable leadership and personal engagement in ensuring that emerging environmental challenges were brought to the attention of Governments and the international community. There had been significant achievements over the previous 40 years; nevertheless, the state of the environment had not improved. She noted that more ambitious reforms were needed, and voiced support for proposals to upgrade UNEP to a specialized agency.

41. The representative of Ecuador called for the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development to incorporate input from regional initiatives, highlighting key issues for the Latin American and Caribbean region, such as social inclusion, intergenerational solidarity and support for communities affected by natural disasters, identified in the Quito Declaration of the eighteenth meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean.

42. The representative of India expressed the hope that the current session would contribute to a positive, ambitious, fair and equitable outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, while cautioning against prejudging that outcome. The representative of Brazil, endorsing those comments, expressed her Government's commitment to the success of the Conference.

43. The representative of South Africa, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, expressed appreciation for UNEP efforts at a pivotal time for the international community in the lead-up to the crucially important United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

F. Introduction of the draft decisions prepared by the Committee of Permanent Representatives

44. Mr. Geert Aagaard Andersen, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Denmark to UNEP and Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, presented to the Council/Forum for its consideration the draft decisions prepared by the Committee, as contained in document UNEP/GCSS.XII/L.1, highlighting the collaborative process by which the draft decisions had been prepared and the challenges that it had entailed.

G. Ministerial consultations

45. At its 2nd plenary meeting, on the afternoon of 20 February, the Council/Forum began its consideration of agenda item 4 (emerging policy issues: environment and development), in the form of ministerial consultations, focusing on the theme "The environmental agenda in the changing world: from Stockholm (1972) to Rio (2012)", under which two sub-themes related to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development were addressed: "The green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication" and "The institutional framework for sustainable development and emerging challenges".

46. The ministerial consultations began with a symposium on the theme "Environmental change and global response in 2012". The symposium was divided into two parts: a panel discussion evaluating the current state of the world's environment and emerging challenges and assessing programmatic responses that addressed the necessary governance and institutional framework reforms needed; and a dialogue with the former executive directors of UNEP on the theme "1972–2012: a review of the evolution of global environmental policy and institutional architecture".

47. At the 3rd plenary meeting ministers engaged in discussion of the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, while at the 4th plenary meeting they considered the institutional framework for sustainable development. At the 5th plenary meeting, they participated in a moderated discussion on "Rio+20 and beyond: responding to the challenges".

48. At the 6th plenary meeting, on the afternoon of Wednesday, 22 February, the President of the Council/Forum presented a draft summary of the views expressed during the ministerial consultations on each theme considered during the twelfth special session of the Council/Forum. He said that the summary reflected the variety of views expressed during the consultations and did not constitute a consensus text. Some representatives said that the summary did not fully reflect the range of opinions expressed on some issues, particularly the green economy.

49. The Council/Forum took note of the President's summary, the final version of which is set out in annex III to the present proceedings. The summary and the appendix thereto are presented as submitted, without formal editing.

H. Report of the Committee of the Whole

50. The Committee of the Whole held four meetings, from 20 to 22 February 2012, to consider the agenda items assigned to it. At its 6th plenary meeting, on 22 February, the Council/Forum took note of the report of the Committee of the Whole. The report is set out in annex II to the present proceedings.

III. Adoption of decisions

51. At its 6th plenary meeting, the Council/Forum adopted the following decisions:

Decision No.	Title
SS.XII/1	Accountability and financial and administrative arrangements between the United Nations Environment Programme and the multilateral environmental agreements for which it provides the secretariat or performs secretariat functions
SS.XII/2	Enhanced coordination across the United Nations system, including the Environment Management Group
SS.XII/3	International environmental governance
SS.XII/4	Consultative process on financing options for chemicals and wastes
SS.XII/5	Enhancing cooperation and coordination within the chemicals and wastes cluster
SS.XII/6	World environmental situation
SS.XII/7	Work by the United Nations Environment Programme on sustainable consumption and production
SS.XII/8	Ministerial statement on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations Environment Programme

IV. Credentials of representatives

52. In accordance with rule 17, paragraph 2, of the rules of procedure, the Bureau examined the credentials of the representatives attending the session. Representatives of 53 of the 57 member States² attended the session and their credentials were found to be in order. The Bureau so reported to the Council/Forum, which approved the Bureau's report at the 6th plenary meeting, on 22 February 2012.

V. Emerging policy issues: environment and development

53. Agenda item 4 was considered by the Committee of the Whole. The report on the deliberations of the Committee is contained in annex II to the present proceedings.

54. The decisions adopted by the Council/Forum on the item are set out in annex I to the present proceedings and are listed in chapter III above.

VI. Other matters

A. Tribute to the memory of Mr. John Michuki, Minister of Environment and Mineral Resources of Kenya

55. At the invitation of the Chair, the Council/Forum members observed a minute of silence to pay tribute to the memory of Mr. John Michuki, Minister of Environment and Mineral Resources of Kenya.

² As at 22 February 2012, the seat of the fifty-eighth member of the Council/Forum was vacant.

B. Adoption of the ministerial statement

56. At its 6th plenary meeting, on 22 February 2012, the Council/Forum adopted a ministerial statement on the fortieth anniversary of UNEP, which had been developed through informal consultations during the current session. The statement is set out in annex I to the present proceedings (see decision SS.XII/8).

VII. Adoption of the report

57. The present proceedings were adopted by the Council/Forum at its 6th plenary meeting, on 22 February 2012, on the basis of the draft proceedings which had been circulated and on the understanding that the Rapporteur, with the support of the secretariat, would be entrusted with their finalization.

VIII. Closure of the session

58. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the twelfth special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum was declared closed by the President of the Council/Forum at 7.25 p.m. on Wednesday, 22 February 2012.

Annex I

Decisions adopted by the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its twelfth special session

Decision No.	Title
SS.XII/1	Accountability and financial and administrative arrangements between the United Nations Environment Programme and the multilateral environmental agreements for which it provides the secretariat or performs secretariat functions
SS.XII/2	Enhanced coordination across the United Nations system, including the Environment Management Group
SS.XII/3	International environmental governance
SS.XII/4	Consultative process on financing options for chemicals and wastes
SS.XII/5	Enhancing cooperation and coordination within the chemicals and wastes cluster
SS.XII/6	World environmental situation
SS.XII/7	Work by the United Nations Environment Programme on sustainable consumption and production
SS.XII/8	Ministerial statement on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations Environment Programme

SS.XII/1: Accountability and financial and administrative arrangements between the United Nations Environment Programme and the multilateral environmental agreements for which it provides the secretariat or performs secretariat functions

The Governing Council,

Reiterating paragraph 18 of its decision 26/9 of 24 February 2011 as the basis for further work,

Having considered the progress report submitted by the Executive Director on the implementation of paragraph 18 of Governing Council decision 26/9,¹

1. *Notes* the progress made and action taken by the United Nations Environment Programme on the implementation of paragraph 18 of decision 26/9;
2. *Requests* the Executive Director to provide, at the twenty-seventh session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, a report on the full implementation of paragraph 18 of decision 26/9 with a view to examining how to strengthen further the cooperation and coordination between the United Nations Environment Programme and the relevant multilateral environmental agreements;
3. *Emphasizes* the need to consult further with the relevant multilateral environmental agreement secretariats, the United Nations Board of Auditors, the Office of Legal Affairs and all relevant bodies and to include their input and comments, including information on the legal bases of accountability issues and the financial and administrative arrangements, in the report referred to in paragraph 1 above.

1 UNEP/GCSS.XII/9.

SS.XII/2: Enhanced coordination across the United Nations system, including the Environment Management Group

The Governing Council,

Recognizing the role of the United Nations Environment Programme in enhancing coordination and collaboration across the United Nations system to achieve greater coherence in environmental activities,

Recalling its decision 26/11 of 24 February 2011, on enhanced coordination across the United Nations system, including the Environment Management Group,

Welcoming the efforts of the Executive Director, including in his capacity as Chair of the Environment Management Group, and those of the Group's members, in promoting cooperation across the United Nations system on environmental activities,

Expressing appreciation for the progress report prepared under the guidance of the senior officials of the Group at their seventeenth meeting and presented by the Executive Director,²

Commending the Group on its progress in enhancing United Nations system-wide inter-agency coordination on specific issues in the field of environment and human settlements,

Welcoming in particular the Group's contribution to the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, and its decision to continue its support for the drylands agenda across the United Nations system,

Expressing appreciation for the Group's contribution to the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development through its reports *Working Towards a Balanced and Inclusive Green Economy: A United Nations System-wide Perspective* and "Advancing the environmental and social sustainability in the United Nations system",³

1. *Supports* the Group's continued efforts to mainstream environmental considerations into activities at the programme, management and operational levels in close cooperation with the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination and its subsidiary bodies;
2. *Encourages* the Group to continue to promote coherence in environmental activities across the United Nations system, including by mainstreaming environmental concerns into sectoral programmes, through such measures as:
 - (a) Contributing to the implementation of the international agenda on biodiversity and, in particular, the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity at its tenth meeting;⁴
 - (b) Preparing for consideration by the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification at its eleventh session a United Nations system-wide action plan for the period 2012–2018 on follow-up to its report on drylands;⁵
3. *Also encourages* the Group to continue its consultations on advancing the framework for environmental and social sustainability in the United Nations system and to move towards environmental sustainability management systems and climate neutrality in the United Nations;
4. *Requests* the Executive Director in his capacity as Chair of the Group to provide a progress report on the Group's work to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its twenty-seventh session;
5. *Invites* the Executive Director in his capacity as the Chair of the Group to transmit a progress report on the Group's work to the governing bodies of the Group's member organizations, through the heads of those organizations, for their information;
6. *Also invites* the Executive Director, in the context of the development of the draft programme of work for the biennium 2014–2015, to submit, for consideration by the Committee of Permanent Representatives, proposals relating to the allocation of resources for the Group's activities to reflect better the workload of the Group secretariat.

2 UNEP/GCSS.XII/10.

3 To be published on the Group's website at www.unemg.org.

4 Decision X/2, annex.

5 *Global Drylands: A United Nations System-wide Response*.

SS.XII/3: International environmental governance

The Governing Council,

Recalling its decision 26/1 of 24 February 2011 on international environmental governance,

Taking note of the implementation by the Executive Director of the incremental reforms that were identified in the set of options presented to the Governing Council at its eleventh special session, in February 2010, by the Consultative Group of Ministers or High-level Representatives on International Environmental Governance established under Governing Council decision 25/4 of 20 February 2009,⁶

Taking note also of the continuing consultations, in the context of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, on the institutional framework for sustainable development, and considering that international environmental governance is one particularly important component of those consultations,

Recalling the commitment set out in the 2010 Nusa Dua Declaration⁷ to strengthening the role of the United Nations 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 United Nations system and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment, as set out in the 1997 Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme,⁸

1. *Recognizes* the importance of enhancing synergies, including at the national and regional levels, among the biodiversity-related conventions, without prejudice to their specific objectives and recognizing their respective mandates, and encourages the conferences of the parties to those conventions to strengthen efforts further in that regard, taking into account relevant experiences;

2. *Invites* the Executive Director to undertake, as appropriate, further activities to improve the effectiveness of and cooperation among multilateral environmental agreements, taking into account the autonomous decision-making authority of the conferences of the parties, and to enhance cooperation with the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction;

3. *Requests* the Executive Director to explore the opportunities for further synergies in the administrative functions of the multilateral environmental agreement secretariats administered by the United Nations Environment Programme and to provide advice on such opportunities to the governing bodies of those multilateral environmental agreements;

4. *Also requests* the Executive Director to explore the possibility of signing or updating memorandums of understanding with other United Nations bodies, in particular with the specialized agencies and regional commissions, in order to coordinate endeavours by United Nations secretariats, avoid overlapping, enhance cooperation and build on synergies in the implementation of the programmes and policies of those bodies in support of sustainable development;

5. *Recalls* the invitation by the General Assembly to the relevant United Nations funds, and programmes and the specialized agencies and multilateral environmental agreements to consider mainstreaming the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building into their overall activities, and calls upon Governments and other stakeholders in a position to do so to provide the funding and technical assistance and capacity-building necessary to advance further and implement fully the Bali Strategic Plan, and invites the General Assembly to examine the possibility of developing a system-wide capacity-building framework for its implementation;

6. *Invites* the General Assembly to examine the possibility of developing a system-wide strategy for the environment;

7. *Requests* the Executive Director to instruct and give guidance to the regional offices of the United Nations Environment Programme to strengthen the cooperation between the Programme and other United Nations bodies, including regional commissions and other regional bodies, and to promote collaboration between the Programme and the secretariats of regional integration organizations in an effort to promote actions pertinent to the environmental dimension of sustainable development;

6 UNEP/GCSS.XI/11, annex II.

7 Ibid., annex I, decision SS.XI/9.

8 UNEP/GC.19/34, annex I, decision 19/1, annex.

8. *Encourages* member States to provide, on a voluntary basis, extrabudgetary funding to strengthen the regional offices of the United Nations Environment Programme.

SS.XII/4: Consultative process on financing options for chemicals and wastes

The Governing Council,

Recalling its decision SS.XI/8 of 26 February 2010 and the need for heightened efforts to increase the political priority accorded to the sound management of chemicals and wastes and the increased need for sustainable, predictable, adequate and accessible financing for the chemicals and wastes agenda,

Recalling also that in decision SS.XI/8 it requested the Executive Director to launch, in collaboration with relevant partners, initiatives to raise awareness of the importance of the sound management of chemicals and wastes through various avenues, including the media and key international opportunities such as intergovernmental meetings and public events at both the national and international levels,

Taking note of General Assembly resolution 65/162 of 20 December 2010, in which the Assembly welcomed the consultative process on financing options for chemicals and wastes and expressed support for further efforts through the United Nations Environment Programme to continue such discussions,

Recalling its decision 26/7 of 24 February 2011, in which it requested the Executive Director to submit a final report to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its twelfth special session on the implementation of decisions SS.XI/8 and 26/7,

Recognizing the importance of an integrated approach to financing the sound management of chemicals and wastes to maximize impact, particularly at the national level,

Recalling the financial provisions of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants,

Stressing that technology support and capacity-building, along with financial assistance, support the effective implementation of the sound management of chemicals and wastes and obligations under relevant conventions,

Having considered the final report submitted by the Executive Director on the consultative process on financing options for chemicals and wastes,⁹

1. *Welcomes* the consultative process on financing options for chemicals and wastes and takes note of its outcome and the final report of the Executive Director;

2. *Takes note* of the co-chairs' summary of the discussions of the contact group on finance and technical assistance convened during the first meeting of the Open-ended Working Group of the International Conference on Chemicals Management, held in November 2011,¹⁰ at which the participants considered possible long-term financing options for the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, including elements of the integrated approach pertinent to the Strategic Approach;

3. *Encourages* the participants in other processes related to chemicals and wastes, including the International Conference on Chemicals Management, to take into consideration, as appropriate, the integrated approach and the final report of the Executive Director;

4. *Recognizes* that the continuing negotiation of a legally binding instrument on mercury, including its financing mechanisms, is a parallel process that should not be delayed or prejudged by the consultative process on financing options for the sound management of chemicals and wastes, and invites the intergovernmental negotiating committee to prepare a global legally binding instrument on mercury to consider, as appropriate, the outcome document of the consultative process and the final report of the Executive Director;

5. *Encourages* Governments and other relevant stakeholders to consider taking into account the integrated approach, the outcome document and the final report of the Executive Director

9 UNEP/GCSS.XII/8.

10 UNEP/GCSS.XII/INF/8.

in preparing for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and other high-level international policy processes;

6. *Requests* the Executive Director to continue to provide support to the consultative process, subject to the availability of extrabudgetary resources, with a view to elaborating further a final outcome based on the integrated approach to financing the sound management of chemicals and wastes;

7. *Also requests* the Executive Director, taking into consideration the outcome document of the consultative process and his final report, to prepare a draft proposal, and to seek advice thereon through a consultative process, for consideration and possible decision at the third session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management, in 2012, and at the twenty-seventh session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, in 2013;

8. *Further requests* the Executive Director, in collaboration with relevant partners, to continue to raise awareness of the importance of the sound management of chemicals and wastes and to report on progress in the implementation of the present decision to the participants in relevant intergovernmental processes and meetings;

9. *Invites* Governments and other interested parties, including members of the private sector, to provide financial and in-kind support for the consultative process.

SS.XII/5: Enhancing cooperation and coordination within the chemicals and wastes cluster

Recalling its decision 26/12 of 24 February 2011 on enhancing cooperation and coordination within the chemicals and wastes cluster,

Recalling also that, in that decision, it requested the Executive Director to provide input to the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and to present a progress report on the consultative process on financing options for chemicals and wastes to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its twelfth special session and a report on the outcome of the consultative process to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its twenty-seventh session,

Having considered the progress report submitted by the Executive Director on the implementation of Governing Council decision 26/12,¹¹

1. *Notes* the progress made and the activities carried out to date by the Executive Director in the implementation of decision 26/12;

2. *Takes note* of the adoption of decisions BC-10/29, RC-5/12 and SC-5/27 by the conferences of the parties to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, respectively, on enhancing cooperation and coordination among those conventions;

3. *Reiterates* its request to the Executive Director to facilitate and support an inclusive, country-driven consultative process on the challenges to and options for further enhancing cooperation and coordination in the chemicals and wastes cluster in the long term;

4. *Urges* Governments and other stakeholders in a position to do so to contribute extrabudgetary resources for the conduct of the process referred to in paragraph 3 above;

5. *Invites* the participants at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development to promote recognition of the importance of the sound management of chemicals and wastes for human health and the environment.

SS.XII/6: World environmental situation

The Governing Council,

Pursuing its functions and responsibilities as outlined in General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972 and subsequent mandates such as those set out in the

11 UNEP/GCSS.XII/11.

Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme¹² and the Malmö Ministerial Declaration,¹³ which include the responsibility to keep the world environmental situation under review to ensure that emerging environmental problems of wide international significance are prioritized and receive appropriate and adequate consideration by Governments and to promote the contribution of relevant international scientific and other professional communities to the acquisition, assessment and exchange of environmental knowledge and information,

Recalling its decisions 22/1 of 7 February 2003, on early warning, assessment and monitoring, 23/6 of 25 February 2005, on keeping the world environmental situation under review, and 24/2, 25/2 and 26/2, of 9 February 2007, 20 February 2009 and 24 February 2011, respectively, on the world environmental situation,

Taking note of the publication *Keeping Track of Our Changing Environment: From Rio to Rio+20 (1992–2012)*, which is based on the fifth Global Environment Outlook assessment report and shows how global economic, social and environmental conditions have changed over the 20 years since the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development,

1. *Welcomes* the progress in preparing the fifth Global Environment Outlook report;
2. *Takes note* of the endorsement of the summary for policymakers of the fifth Global Environment Outlook assessment report by the representatives of Governments at the intergovernmental meeting held in Gwangju City, Republic of Korea, in January 2012 in accordance with Governing Council decision 25/2;
3. *Notes with great concern* that severe changes have taken place in the environment, ranging from the impact of climate change and the loss of biodiversity and species extinction to the degradation of land and the deterioration of water resources and the oceans;
4. *Requests* the Executive Director, through the programme of work, to continue developing and implementing an outreach strategy for disseminating the findings of the fifth Global Environment Outlook report;
5. *Recognizes* that the transition to sustainable development varies by country and must be addressed by well-governed, effectively managed, innovative, result-oriented institutions able to create appropriate conditions for change;
6. *Stresses* that the United Nations Environment Programme should provide science-based information to support parties and other relevant stakeholders in their transition to sustainable development;
7. *Calls upon* Governments to demonstrate strong leadership individually and collectively, to implement effective policies to monitor, regulate, sustainably manage and improve the environment and ecosystem services and to continue to cooperate within the framework of multilateral processes that aim to prevent and reverse environmental degradation;
8. *Calls upon* Governments, United Nations bodies, international organizations, the private sector, civil society and the public at large to work with the United Nations Environment Programme and other environmental institutions to integrate science-based environmental information, including from global, regional and national assessments, into the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development;
9. *Calls upon* Governments, in the lead-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, to assess progress and gaps in the implementation of goals, policies and programmes aimed at tackling environmental degradation so as to facilitate agreement on a way forward;
10. *Recognizes* that there are gaps in our knowledge of the state of the environment resulting from a lack of data and regular monitoring, particularly in areas such as freshwater quality and quantity, groundwater depletion, ecosystem services, loss of natural habitat, land degradation and chemicals and wastes;
11. *Calls upon* Governments and the multilateral system to design and implement programmes for bridging the data gaps referred to above, as appropriate, including by building national and regional capacities and establishing regular processes for data-based environmental monitoring and early warning at the national and local levels, subject to national priorities and policies and the availability of funding;

12 Governing Council decision 19/1 of 7 February 1997, annex.

13 UNEP/GCSS.VI/9, annex I.

12. *Requests* the Executive Director to make it a priority for the United Nations Environment Programme to assist developing countries and countries with economies in transition to strengthen their capacities to collect and analyse data and information and monitor environmental trends, as stipulated in the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building, and making information available to policymakers and the public in an open access format such as UNEP-Live;

13. *Also requests* the Executive Director, through the programme of work and by working with national and regional environmental authorities, to build capacity and to support technology transfer for developing countries and countries with economies in transition, within the framework of the Bali Strategic Plan, with a view to responding to current and future challenges facing humanity:

(a) By partnering with centres of excellence to support developing countries and countries with economies in transition in the conduct of integrated assessments at the national level to provide compelling evidence for informed decision-making;

(b) By cooperating with the United Nations system and with other bodies to collect environmental data sets, develop and maintain relevant indicators and promote the exchange of best practices in the area of environmental governance;

14. *Takes note* of the outcome of the first Eye on Earth Summit, held from 12 to 15 December 2011 in Abu Dhabi and the commitment of the Government of the United Arab Emirates to facilitating and supporting the special initiatives contained in the Eye on Earth Declaration, in particular the Global Network of Networks Initiative;

15. *Recommends* that coherence continue to be sought between the long-term requirements of UNEP-Live and other components of information systems designed for global and regional environmental assessments and data sharing and that the United Nations Environment Programme, upon request, consider undertaking capacity-building activities to enhance the participation of developing countries and countries with economies in transition in the Eye on Earth Summit follow-up process.

SS.XII/7: Work by the United Nations Environment Programme on sustainable consumption and production

The Governing Council,

Stressing the call in Agenda 21¹⁴ for action to promote patterns of consumption and production that reduce environmental stress and meet the basic needs of humanity, and recalling that changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production is one of the overarching objectives of, and an essential requirement for, sustainable development, as stated in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development,¹⁵

Recalling its decisions 22/6 of 7 February 2003, on the promotion of sustainable consumption and production patterns, and 26/5 of 24 February 2011, on a 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production,

Recalling also the invitation for support for target 4 of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 of the Convention on Biological Diversity, with its Aichi Biodiversity Targets,¹⁶ adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention at its tenth meeting, held in October 2010, which provides that by 2020, at the latest, Governments, business and stakeholders at all levels will have taken steps to achieve or have implemented plans for sustainable consumption and production and will have kept the impacts of the use of natural resources well within safe ecological limits,

Noting that resource efficiency and sustainable consumption and production together constitute one of the six cross-cutting priorities of the United Nations Environment Programme medium-term strategy for the period 2010–2013,

14 *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3–14 June 1992* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: resolutions adopted by the Conference, resolution 1, annex II.

15 *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

16 UNEP/CBD/COP/10/27, annex, decision X/2.

Commending the work by the United Nations Environment Programme since the twenty-second session of the Governing Council in advancing sustainable consumption and production,

Welcoming the sustainable consumption and production partnerships and joint initiatives developed through close cooperation between the United Nations Environment Programme and other regional and United Nations entities, including the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the United Nations Development Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Tourism Organization, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and other key stakeholders,

Noting the achievements of the Marrakech Process on sustainable consumption and production, a global, multi-stakeholder process launched by Governments and major group initiatives and, with their valuable support, implemented in all regions with the United Nations Environment Programme and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, which is playing a key role in providing input for the elaboration of the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production called for in chapter III of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, which was considered by the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development during its 2010–2011 implementation cycle,

Recognizing the valuable support for the Marrakech Process provided by Governments and major groups,

Noting that, while the 2010–2011 cycle of the Commission on Sustainable Development did not result in the adoption of a decision on sustainable consumption and production, it did indicate the readiness of the international community to take action to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production, its readiness to establish a 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production and its support for the continuation and reinforcement of the work of the United Nations Environment Programme in the area of sustainable consumption and production,

Acknowledging that further progress in achieving sustainable consumption and production requires a more coherent and sustained approach and the provision of tools, information and capacity-building for mainstreaming sustainable consumption and production at all levels,

Recognizing that consumption and production are central to global and national economic activity and that the promotion of sustainable consumption and production, based on life-cycle approaches, including resource efficiency and sustainable use of resources, is therefore required to achieve sustainable development,

1. *Reaffirms* the importance of sustainable consumption and production to the mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme, and requests the Executive Director to enhance support for the development and implementation of the resource efficiency/sustainable consumption and production subprogramme, which encompasses and contributes to work by the United Nations Environment Programme on the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication;
2. *Requests* the Executive Director to provide support for the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements that focuses on the implementation of sustainable consumption and production plans at the national level;
3. *Encourages* Governments, the private sector and other stakeholders to enhance efforts to shift to sustainable consumption and production, particularly in sectors with high environmental and social impact, including through corporate environmental and social responsibility;
4. *Requests* the Executive Director to undertake activities on sustainable consumption and production in the programme of work of the United Nations Environment Programme, taking into account those responsibilities identified in the text elaborated by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its nineteenth session, in line with the United Nations Environment Programme medium-term strategy and within available resources;
5. *Calls upon* the Executive Director, with the cooperation of member States, to make use of the scientific and policy knowledge base and relevant international science policy mechanisms, including the International Resource Panel;

6. *Invites* Governments to support the adoption of the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production elaborated by the relevant working group of the nineteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development;¹⁷

7. *Requests* the Executive Director to submit a report on sustainable consumption and production in the light of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and on the implementation of the present decision to the Governing Council at its twenty-seventh session, in 2013.

SS.XII/8: Ministerial statement on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations Environment Programme

The Governing Council

Adopts the following statement:

1. We, the ministers and heads of delegation of the United Nations Environment Programme Global Ministerial Environment Forum, met in Nairobi from 20 to 22 February 2012 for the twelfth special session of the Global Ministerial Environment Forum, celebrating the fortieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme in 1972.

2. We congratulate the United Nations Environment Programme on its successes and effective undertakings, in addition to the progress that has been achieved over the past 40 years, including the establishment of important multilateral environmental agreements, the development of environmental laws and policies, the findings of key scientific assessments and the stronger awareness of environmental issues at all levels.

3. We recall our commitment to strengthening the role of the United Nations Environment Programme as the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, that promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimensions of sustainable development within the United Nations system and that serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment, as set out in the 1997 Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme.

4. We recognize that we depend on natural systems and resources for our existence and, the successes of the United Nations Environment Programme notwithstanding, we are deeply concerned about continued environmental degradation, which poses a threat to the natural systems and resources on which we depend.

5. We recognize the summary for policymakers of the fifth Global Environment Outlook assessment report as an important synthesis of scientific information on environment for policymakers and decision-makers about freshwater, biodiversity, climate change, land, chemicals and wastes, energy and oceans and seas.

6. We will therefore continue to strengthen our actions to reverse environmental degradation, to promote a holistic approach to sustainable development and to contribute to the conservation of the essential natural resources and ecosystems on which our economies and societies depend.

7. We welcome the upcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in June 2012 as a unique opportunity to tackle economic, social and environmental challenges in the context of sustainable development and we commit ourselves to making the Conference a success.

17 *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Supplement No. 29 (E/2011/29), chap. II., sect. E.*

Annex II

Report of the Committee of the Whole

Rapporteur: Ms. Liana Bratasida (Indonesia)

Introduction

1. At the 1st plenary meeting of its twelfth special session, on the morning of 20 February 2012, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum decided to establish a committee of the whole to consider agenda items 4 (emerging policy issues: environment and development) and 5 (other matters). The Committee was also to consider draft decisions prepared by the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UNEP and proposed for adoption by the Council/Forum, which were contained in document UNEP/GCSS.XII/L.1.

2. The Committee of the Whole held four meetings, from 20 to 22 February 2012, and was chaired by Mr. László Borbély (Romania) in accordance with the decision of the Council/Forum taken at its 1st plenary meeting. In addition, the Committee elected Ms. Liana Bratasida (Indonesia) to serve as Rapporteur.

I. Opening of the meeting

3. The Chair of the Committee of the Whole opened the meeting and outlined the conduct of work.

II. Organization of work

4. The Committee agreed to follow the programme of work as set out in a conference room paper circulated to Committee members at its 1st meeting. Delegations were requested to submit any draft decisions to the Secretary of the Governing Council by the end of the afternoon meeting on Monday, 20 February. Draft decisions would be discussed under the relevant agenda items and suggestions on language and text would be addressed by the Committee of the Whole.

5. In considering the items before it, the Committee had before it the documentation outlined for each item in the annotations to the agenda for the current session (UNEP/GCSS.XII/1/Add.1/Rev.1).

6. The Committee agreed to establish a drafting group, to be co-chaired by Ms. Kerstin Stendahl (Finland) and Mr. Domingo D. Lucenario (Philippines) and consisting of at least two members from each of the five United Nations regional groups, to work on such draft decisions as the Committee might submit to it.

7. The Committee heard an introductory statement by Ms. Amina Mohamed, Deputy Executive Director of UNEP, on behalf of the Executive Director of UNEP, in which she stressed that the heavy agenda facing the Committee constituted an opportunity to discuss common goals and aspirations in the lead-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. She then drew attention to seven draft decisions that had been prepared by the Committee of Permanent Representatives covering 15 important issues relating to the UNEP programme of work for the biennium 2012–2013 and the medium-term strategy for the period 2010–2013, which were set out in document UNEP/GCSS.XII/L.1. She outlined the content of the draft decisions and stressed the importance of the desired outcomes for international environmental governance, such as strengthening the role of environment ministers, developing synergies between multilateral environmental agreements and providing extrabudgetary funding for regional offices. She said that UNEP and other entities had worked tirelessly to revitalize the coordination system to enhance coordination across the United Nations system, and in closing expressed the hope that the discussions at the current session would be fruitful and conducted in a spirit of goodwill.

III. Emerging policy issues: environment and development

A. International environmental governance

8. The Committee took up the issue at its 1st plenary meeting, on the afternoon of Monday, 20 February 2012, with an introduction by the representative of the secretariat, who said that the aim of the draft decision on the subject (UNEP/GCSS.XII/L.1, draft decision 1) was the approval of

selected incremental reforms to be undertaken by UNEP that required a Governing Council decision for their implementation, the strengthening of the role of environment ministers in setting the global environmental agenda and the enhancement of collaboration on sustainable development.

9. In the ensuing discussion, several representatives noted that the draft decision was timely given the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development but urged caution to ensure that any decision adopted at the current session did not pre-empt the outcomes of the Conference. Several representatives welcomed the reforms undertaken to date, as described in the Executive Director's report on international environmental governance (UNEP/GCSS.XII/3), and requested the Executive Director to implement the remaining reforms.

10. All representatives voiced support for the strengthening of UNEP. Many voiced support for the upgrading of UNEP to a specialized agency of the United Nations system. Others argued that changing UNEP to a specialized agency could weaken it. Many stressed the importance of synergies between multilateral environmental agreements in the efforts to combat environmental degradation and emphasized that greater cooperation and synergies between actors were necessary in the lead-up to the Conference.

11. Following the discussion, the Committee agreed to establish a subcommittee, chaired by Mr. Tonatiuh Romero (Mexico), to consider the matter further and to finalize the draft decision on international environmental governance.

12. Following the discussions of the subcommittee, at its 4th plenary meeting, on the morning of Wednesday, 22 February 2012, the Committee approved for consideration and possible adoption by the Council/Forum a draft decision on international environmental governance (UNEP/GCSS.XII/CW/L.2/Add.1).

B. Chemicals and wastes

13. The Committee took up the issue at its 1st plenary meeting, on the afternoon of Monday, 20 February 2012. Introducing the issue, the representative of the secretariat said that two matters related to chemicals and wastes were under consideration at the current session: the consultative process on financing options for chemicals and wastes; and enhancing cooperation and coordination within the chemicals and wastes cluster. He drew attention to the draft decisions on those matters prepared by the Committee of Permanent Representatives (UNEP/GCSS.XII/L.1, draft decisions 4 and 7).

14. Most representatives who took the floor welcomed the report of the Executive Director on the consultative process on financing options for chemicals and wastes and the outcome document of the consultative process. There was overall support for the adoption of the integrated approach to financing discussed in the outcome document, which promised a sustainable solution to the financial challenges facing the chemicals and wastes cluster.

15. Several representatives emphasized the need for urgency if a fully fledged proposal on an integrated approach to financing the sound management of chemicals and wastes was to be prepared in time for the third session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management, in September 2012, as suggested by the Executive Director in his report (UNEP/GCSS.XII/8). One representative noted that although the consultative process, in line with its mandate, had been limited in terms of participation and had not involved negotiation, it could be continued as a source of advice to the Governing Council through the Executive Director.

16. A number of representatives expressed caution about placing too much faith in the consultative process until there was a clear indication that developed countries would commit adequate financial and technical resources in the long term to assist developing countries and countries with economies in transition in the management of chemicals and wastes. One said that care should be taken to avoid affecting decisions or pre-empting the outcomes of other negotiations on financing in the chemicals cluster, specifically the upcoming expert group meeting, to be held in April 2012 as part of the intersessional work of the intergovernmental negotiating committee to prepare a global legally binding instrument on mercury, at which participants would discuss possible financing mechanisms under that instrument. Another said that discussions on financing as part of the work of the intergovernmental negotiating committee on mercury and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management had been enriched by the consultative process.

17. A representative of major groups and stakeholders welcomed the consultative process, saying that there was a need for the sound management of wastes, including electronic wastes, given the growing number of workers exposed to hazards in the workplace. Another representative noted that the business and industry sector was committed to advancing the chemicals and wastes agenda,

including through partnerships and information sharing. The Strategic Approach offered the best framework for progress in that regard, and merited strengthening.

18. Several representatives commended the progress that had been made in enhancing cooperation and coordination among the chemicals and wastes conventions, although some suggested that care should be taken to ensure that the autonomy of each convention was respected.

19. With a view to facilitating the Committee's consideration of the matter, the Chair requested representatives to provide comments in writing. The Committee agreed to submit to the drafting group the draft decision on chemicals and wastes, which would take into account any written comments submitted.

20. Following the deliberations of the drafting group, at its 4th plenary meeting, on the morning of Wednesday, 22 February 2012, the Committee approved for consideration and possible adoption by the Council/Forum a draft decision on the consultative process on financing options for chemicals and wastes (UNEP/GCSS.XII/CW/L.3, draft decision 1).

21. The Committee also approved for consideration and possible adoption by the Council/Forum a draft decision on enhancing cooperation and coordination within the chemicals and wastes cluster (UNEP/GCSS.XII/CW/L.3, draft decision 2).

C. Progress reports by the Executive Director

22. The Committee took up the matter at its 2nd plenary meeting, on the morning of Tuesday, 21 February 2012. The representative of the secretariat introduced a number of reports by the Executive Director prepared in response to requests from the Council/Forum, on chemicals and waste management (UNEP/GCSS.XII/5), on an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services (UNEP/GCSS.XII/6) and on the implementation of the water policy and strategy of UNEP for the period 2009–2011 (UNEP/GCSS.XII/12), together with a note by the Executive Director on the Manila Declaration on Furthering the Implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (UNEP/GCSS.XII/INF/10).

23. In the ensuing discussion, one representative expressed support for international efforts on chemicals and wastes management in line with the Strategic Approach. It was to be hoped, he said, that progress in the implementation of the Strategic Approach and the effectiveness of parties' interventions on chemicals and wastes would be developed further at the third session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management, to be held in September 2012. He highlighted the importance of the midterm review of the Quick Start Programme under way, expressing the hope that it would include wide stakeholder participation and provide an objective and detailed assessment.

24. One representative welcomed work under way on a joint proposal by UNEP, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on the four entities' possible individual and collective contributions to the secretariat of the intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services and on preparations for the second session of the plenary meeting to determine modalities and institutional arrangements for the platform, scheduled to take place from 16 to 21 April 2012 in Panama City. Another representative stressed that the decision-making process under the intergovernmental science-policy platform should be based on consensus rather than prescriptive decisions. He suggested that the platform should respond to direct requests from States, especially those related to the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements. A number of representatives expressed the hope that institutional arrangements for the platform's operationalization would be finalized at the second session of the plenary meeting.

25. One representative sought clarification on the proposed UNEP water operational policy and strategy, suggesting that transboundary water management might lie beyond the scope of the programme's mandate and that the focus of UNEP was on the environmental aspects of water in accordance with national needs and subject to Government requests. Another said that UNEP had carried out important work on water, commending the overall vision of its operational strategy. Member States looked forward to contributing to the future UNEP water policy during the 2013 International Year of Water Cooperation.

26. A number of representatives urged the secretariat to distribute the draft water policy and strategy to member States for their consideration and comment prior to its finalization. The representative of the secretariat undertook to do so, while noting that the UNEP medium-term strategy for the period 2014–2017, which was currently being drafted, would guide the finalization of the strategy.

27. One representative expressed thanks to the secretariat of the Global Programme of Action for organizing the third session of the Intergovernmental Review Meeting on the Implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities, held in Manila on 25 and 26 January 2012, and welcomed the adoption at that session of the Manila Declaration. He stressed the importance of the Global Programme of Action and endorsed the priorities identified at the session for the coming five years in respect of wastewater, nutrients and marine litter.

D. Sustainable consumption and production

28. The Committee took up the issue at its 2nd plenary meeting, on the morning of Tuesday, 21 February 2012. Introducing it, the representative of the secretariat said that the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development at its nineteenth session had failed to adopt a decision on the establishment of a 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production, despite the clear willingness of both developed and developing countries to establish such a framework. That had left a significant gap in the implementation of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, but UNEP stood ready to play an important role in putting the framework in place. She drew attention to the draft decision on the matter (UNEP/GCSS.XII/L.1, draft decision 3).

29. In the ensuing discussion, broad support was evinced for the 10-year framework, with several representatives expressing the wish to see it adopted. There was general appreciation for the work of UNEP on sustainable consumption and production and several representatives praised its role in the Marrakech Process.

30. A number of representatives spoke in favour of keeping any decision on the matter as concise and procedural as possible and cautioned against reopening issues that had already been agreed upon by the Commission. One said that incorporating the results of discussions in other forums should be avoided.

31. Several representatives emphasized that sustainable consumption and production were an important element of sustainable development and necessary for the achievement of a green economy. One said that sustainable consumption and production could not be achieved without the broad involvement in the process of major groups and stakeholders, another that the draft decision should reflect the fact that sustainable consumption and production were issues for both developed and developing countries and a third that Governments should be encouraged to use electronic media and social networks to promote sustainable consumption and production.

32. A number of representatives proposed amendments to the draft decision on the matter prepared by the Committee of Permanent Representatives. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of Governments, made a proposal on how to refer to resource efficiency in the context of this draft decision and a proposal by which the draft decision would invite Governments to support the adoption of a 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. After it heard those proposals, the Committee of the Whole referred them to the drafting group for further consideration.

33. Following the drafting group's consideration, at its 4th plenary meeting, on the morning of Wednesday, 22 February 2012, the Committee approved for consideration and possible adoption by the Council/Forum a draft decision on work by UNEP on sustainable consumption and production (UNEP/GCSS.XII/CW/L.3/Add.2).

E. World environmental situation

1. Introduction

34. The Committee took up the issue at its 2nd plenary meeting, on the morning of Tuesday, 21 February 2012. The representative of the secretariat gave a presentation on the UNEP Year Book 2012, which, she said, tracked the global state of the environment against a set of indicators. The 2012 edition focused on two emerging issues identified by a network of scientific partners: nuclear decommissioning and the depletion of soil carbon. The importance of the former had been brought to the attention of the world by the Fukushima nuclear accident in Japan in 2011, and various ways of decommissioning nuclear reactors were described in the Year Book. Poor soil management, with the consequent depletion of soil carbon, threatened food security and was also responsible for releasing carbon into the atmosphere, thereby contributing to global warming.

35. Turning to the fifth Global Environment Outlook report summary for policymakers, she noted that the Global Environment Outlook report series was the flagship UNEP report series and provided

snapshots of the state of the environment and the international community's performance in meeting internationally agreed goals. Of the 90 internationally agreed goals reviewed for the fifth report, significant progress had been made on 4, some progress on 40 and little or no progress on 32. Insufficient data had been available to assess progress regarding the remaining 14. The fifth report in the series had a fresh focus on solutions, highlighting policy options to support a transition to an inclusive green economy and sustainable future. She expressed thanks to the Government of the Republic of Korea and the city of Gwangju for hosting the meeting in January 2012 at which the summary had been finalized. The draft decision on the state of the environment before the Council aimed to link the internationally negotiated and Government-endorsed fifth report and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

36. She then gave a presentation on UNEP-Live, prepared in response to decision 26/2, by which the Governing Council had requested the secretariat to explore the development of a dynamic, online, state of the environment reporting process, and sought countries' comments on the initiative.

2. Presentation by the Secretary of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

37. Ms. Renate Christ, Secretary of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, presented a progress report on the work of the Panel in 2011. She highlighted two special reports that had been finalized, on renewable energy sources and climate change mitigation, published in May 2011 in Abu Dhabi, and on managing the risks of extreme events and disasters to advance climate change adaptation, published in November 2011 in Kampala, in addition to work on the Panel's fifth assessment report.

3. Statement by the Secretary-General of the Abu Dhabi Environment Agency

38. Ms. Razan Khalifa Al Mubarak, Secretary-General, Environment Agency, Abu Dhabi, gave a presentation on the Abu Dhabi Global Environment Data Initiative with a view to filling gaps in data on the efforts made by emerging economies to achieve sustainable development, and on the Eye on Earth summit, held in Abu Dhabi in December 2011. The summit had produced a number of initiatives aimed at improving access to environmental data and information, and a declaration adopted by the participants would be submitted to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

4. Discussion

39. A number of representatives took the floor to express appreciation for UNEP efforts to produce and improve the Global Environment Outlook and welcomed the development of the UNEP-Live website. The latter was seen as a means of streamlining reporting at all levels and a welcome contribution to the international environmental governance agenda. The initiatives of the Government of the United Arab Emirates were also welcomed.

40. One representative applauded the engagement of a wide range of science and policy experts in the Global Environment Outlook process, which had raised its standing, but called for the focus to remain on that process rather than on the development of new initiatives. There were recognized gaps in knowledge of the state of the environment, and UNEP efforts to bridge them by building national and regional capacities were appreciated.

41. The Committee agreed that the subcommittee established to consider the draft decision on international environmental governance would also consider the draft decision on the world environment situation, in addition to draft decisions on the consultative process on financing options for chemicals and wastes, enhancing cooperation and coordination in the chemicals and wastes cluster, and sustainable consumption and production.

42. Following the deliberations of the subcommittee, at its 4th plenary meeting, on the morning of Wednesday, 22 February 2012, the Committee approved for consideration and possible adoption by the Council/Forum a draft decision on the world environmental situation (UNEP/GCSS.XII/CW/L.3/Add.1).

F. Budget and programme of work, including the relationship between UNEP and the multilateral environmental agreements that it administers and review of regional offices

43. The Committee took up the issue at its 3rd plenary meeting, on the afternoon of Tuesday, 21 February 2012. Topics to be dealt with of relevance to the budget and programme of work included the needs and potential of the UNEP regional offices; the performance of the programme of work and the budget; and progress in matters pertinent to the relationship between UNEP and the multilateral environmental agreements that it administered.

44. The representative of the secretariat introduced a report of the Executive Director (UNEP/GCSS.XII/9/Add.1) containing a review of the needs and potential of the regional offices, prepared in response to paragraph 21 of decision 26/9, in which the Governing Council had taken note of General Assembly resolution 65/162 calling for increased support for strengthening the human, financial and programmatic capacities of all regional offices of UNEP in the context of its budget and programme of work. The report showed that the strategic presence policy adopted in 2009 had achieved positive results and recommended that UNEP should endeavour to establish a clear business model and processes for its engagement at the regional and country levels and that it should continue to pursue an incremental approach to implementation of the strategic presence policy, within its means.

45. Another representative of the secretariat introduced the programme performance report of UNEP, January 2010–December 2011 (UNEP/GCSS.XII/INF/4), prepared in response to paragraph 14 of decision 26/9, in which the Governing Council had requested the Executive Director to report to Governments, through the Committee of Permanent Representatives, on a yearly basis, and to the Council at its regular and special sessions, on the progress made in respect of each of the UNEP subprogrammes and expected accomplishments and on the execution of the budget of the Environment Fund. UNEP had conducted a self-assessment and external analysis had been performed by donor countries, United Nations review bodies and others. The financial performance of UNEP had been negatively affected by the impact of the economic crisis on some donor countries, and the Executive Director had taken a precautionary approach to the allocation of funds.

46. Another representative of the secretariat introduced a report of the Executive Director on progress on the accountability and financial and administrative arrangements between UNEP and the multilateral environmental agreements for which it provided the secretariat or performed secretariat functions (UNEP/GCSS.XII/9), prepared in response to paragraph 18 of decision 26/9. The report concluded that significant progress had been made on issues of accountability and clarity in the financial and administrative arrangements between UNEP and the multilateral agreements, and that the UNEP secretariat would continue its efforts to enhance further its relationship with those agreements in cooperation and consultation with their governing bodies and with the Board of Auditors, the Office of Legal Affairs and other relevant bodies.

47. In the ensuing discussion, one representative said that the effectiveness and efficiency of the UNEP regional offices would be enhanced by greater transparency and sharing of expertise at the regional level and by the strengthening of coordination between UNEP and the secretariats of other multilateral environment agreements and United Nations bodies, including UNDP.

48. On the issue of the financial and administrative arrangements between UNEP and the multilateral environmental agreements, one representative welcomed the progress made and urged that consultations under way should be advanced to ensure balance and consistency between UNEP and the secretariats of all multilateral environmental agreements for which it provided the secretariat or performed secretariat functions. Several representatives said that the report prepared by the secretariat on the matter had not addressed all the provisions of decision 26/9, and that detail was lacking on, for example, input from and commentary by the multilateral environmental agreements, accountability and the financial and administrative arrangements, including their legal bases. More information should be presented to the Governing Council at its twenty-seventh session with a view to completing the process.

49. Following the discussion, the Chair requested interested delegations to engage in informal consultations on relevant issues. The Committee agreed that the subcommittee considering the draft decision on international environmental governance would also take up the draft decision on the budget and programme of work and related matters prepared by the Committee of Permanent Representatives (UNEP/GCSS.XII/L.1, draft decision 5).

50. Following the deliberations of the subcommittee, at its 4th plenary meeting, on the morning of Wednesday, 22 February 2012, the Committee approved for consideration and possible adoption by the Council/Forum a draft decision on accountability and financial and administrative arrangements between UNEP and the multilateral environmental agreements for which it provided the secretariat or performed secretariat functions (UNEP/GCSS.XII/CW/L.2, draft decision 1).

G. Coordination across the United Nations system

51. The Committee took up the issue at its 3rd plenary meeting, on the afternoon of Tuesday, 21 February 2012.

1. Enhanced coordination across the United Nations system, including the Environment Management Group

52. Introducing the Executive Director's report on enhanced coordination across the United Nations system, including the Environment Management Group (UNEP/GCSS.XII/10), the representative of the secretariat said that it contained pertinent information on enhancing coordination in such areas as biodiversity, climate change and the green economy. It also contained information on the work conducted by various United Nations entities and therefore reflected the spirit of cooperation and coordination among them. It provided general policy guidance for environmental programmes within the United Nations system, including guidance on advancing the framework for environmental and social sustainability in the system.

53. In the ensuing discussion, one representative said that the report usefully outlined the various environmental and social safeguards that had been adopted. Several praised the work of the Environment Management Group on reducing greenhouse gases and enhancing energy efficiency and its success in implementing various environmental projects.

54. One representative said that the Environment Management Group report had been prepared by a consultant and therefore could not be endorsed. In response, the representative of the secretariat clarified that the report had been prepared by various United Nations entities with the involvement of the heads of those entities, and not by a consultant.

2. Update on the status of implementation of the memorandum of understanding between the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Development Programme (UNEP/GCSS.XII/10/Add.1)

55. Introducing the report of the Executive Director on implementation of the memorandum of understanding between UNEP and UNDP, the representative of the secretariat noted that it provided an update and did not require action on the part of the Council/Forum. It highlighted the purpose of the memorandum of understanding and listed the areas of cooperation between UNEP and UNDP, such as climate change, the Poverty and Environment Initiative and other matters related to the implementation of Agenda 21, and discussed new areas for cooperation, including the green economy, sustainable development and South-South cooperation.

56. In the ensuing discussion, one representative said that, given their mandates, increased cooperation between UNEP and UNDP was desirable and that the memorandum of understanding should be improved and clarified. He called for an increase in resources for the Environment Management Group from the Environment Fund for the biennium 2014–2015. Another representative, however, suggested that the Environment Fund already covered related staffing costs and could not be used to finance increased cost.

3. Outcomes of major intergovernmental meetings on the environment held in 2011, including issues arising from the resolutions of the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly

57. The representative of the secretariat reported on issues of relevance to UNEP arising from the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly. Of the 251 resolutions adopted at the session, a significant number were of direct relevance to the programme of work of UNEP and its six subprogrammes. More than 40 resolutions pertaining to economic and financial issues had been adopted by the Second Committee of the Assembly, including resolutions on sustainable development, many in preparation for the upcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

4. Draft decision

58. The Committee agreed that the subcommittee considering the draft decision on international environmental governance would also take up the draft decision on enhanced coordination prepared by the Committee of Permanent Representatives (UNEP/GCSS.XII/L.1, draft decision 6).

59. Following the deliberations of the subcommittee, at its 4th plenary meeting, on the morning of Wednesday, 22 February 2012, the Committee approved for consideration and possible adoption by the Council/Forum a draft decision on enhanced coordination across the United Nations system, including the Environment Management Group (UNEP/GCSS.XII/CW/L.2, draft decision 2).

IV. Other matters

A. Tribute to the memory of Mr. John Michuki, Minister of Environment and Mineral Resources of Kenya

60. At the invitation of the Chair, the Committee members observed a minute of silence to pay tribute to the memory of Mr. John Michuki, Minister of Environment and Mineral Resources of Kenya.

B. Adoption of the report

61. At its 4th plenary meeting, on the morning of Wednesday, 22 February 2012, the Committee adopted the present report on the basis of the draft report circulated during the meeting and as orally amended, on the understanding that the report would be completed and finalized by the Rapporteur, working in conjunction with the secretariat.

V. Closure of the meeting

62. The 4th and final meeting of the Committee of the Whole was declared closed at 2 p.m. on Wednesday, 22 February 2012.

Annex III

President's summary of the discussions by ministers and heads of delegation at the twelfth special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum of the United Nations Environment Programme

1. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum is the United Nations high-level environmental policy forum. It brings the world's environment ministers together to review important and emerging policy issues in the field of the environment.
2. The Council/Forum provides broad policy advice and guidance with the aim, among others, of promoting international cooperation in the field of the environment.
3. The twelfth special session of the Council/Forum was held from 20 to 22 February 2012 at the United Nations Office at Nairobi. The ministerial consultations during the twelfth special session focused on emerging policy issues under the overall theme "The environmental agenda in the changing world: from Stockholm (1972) to Rio (2012)". The session also provided the opportunity to mark the fortieth anniversary of UNEP.
4. The twelfth special session of the Council/Forum included:
 - (a) High-level symposium entitled "Environmental challenges and global responses in 2012";
 - (b) Parallel ministerial round-table discussions on the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication;
 - (c) Parallel ministerial round-table discussions on the institutional framework for sustainable development;
 - (d) Discussion on "Rio+20 and beyond: responding to the challenges".
5. In addition, the twelfth special session of the Council/Forum included:
 - (a) Dialogue with former executive directors of UNEP entitled "1972–2012: a review of the evolution of global environmental policy and institutional architecture";
 - (b) Dialogue with the secretariat and members of the Bureau of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development;
 - (c) Discussion of the report of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Global Sustainability, Resilient People, Resilient Planet: A Future Worth Choosing.
6. The consultations were informed by three papers prepared as background for the participants, the summary for policymakers of the fifth Global Environment Outlook assessment report and the outcome of the thirteenth session of the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum.
7. The present President's summary identifies some of the main challenges and opportunities that were discussed by ministers and other heads of delegation with regard to the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.
8. The summary is a reflection of the interactive dialogue that occurred between the ministers and other heads of delegation attending the twelfth special session of the Council/Forum. It reflects the ideas presented and discussed rather than a consensus view of participants; hence it is not a negotiated document.

I. Overarching theme: the environmental agenda in a changing world: from Stockholm (1972) to Rio (2012)

A. Environmental change and global responses

9. The first session of the ministerial consultations, entitled "Environmental change and global responses in 2012", provided an opportunity for structured dialogue and reflection on the current state of the environment with regard to internationally agreed goals, metrics for sustainable development

and preliminary action-oriented proposals to inform the subsequent sessions on the themes “The green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication” and “The institutional framework for sustainable development”.

10. In opening remarks, ministers and their delegations were informed that all evidence pointed to continuing environmental deterioration, including an unprecedented rate of biodiversity loss, and that greenhouse-gas emissions remained the most significant risk to sustainable development. To be successful, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development would therefore need to focus on priority issues across the most critical sectors, including water, agriculture and energy, and result in agreement on specific steps forward in terms of the policies needed.

11. Delegations then heard a presentation on key findings and recommendations presented in the summary for policymakers of the Fifth Global Environment Outlook assessment report, which was released as a prelude to the full report. The summary, which was negotiated and endorsed by the Governments that were present at a meeting held in the Republic of Korea on 31 January 2012, warns of the continued deterioration of the global environment, pointing out that internationally agreed goals have been only partially met. It calls for policies that focus on the underlying drivers of environmental change rather than concentrate solely on reducing environmental pressures or symptoms.

12. Recommendations in the summary include the use of timely and accurate data to inform decision-making; the reversal of policies that generate unsustainable outcomes; the creation of incentives to advance sustainable practices; urgent cooperative action by Governments to meet internationally agreed goals; the strengthening of access to information; and the engagement of civil society, the private sector and other relevant actors in policymaking processes. The summary also includes examples of policies and practices that can be scaled up in all regions to help countries meet internationally agreed goals.

“You cannot control what you cannot measure: there is a need for consistent time-series data and assessment.”

13. The ensuing panel discussion, which sought to extend these presentations and link the messages to the upcoming Conference on Sustainable Development, dealt with such issues as bridging the data gap and improving access to information, key requirements for supporting the establishment of more effective environmental goals, and how to adapt the current model for economic growth to realize sustainable development.

14. Panellists proposed sustainability as a social value, noting that democracy was a prerequisite for sustainable development, and called for an inclusive green economy approach. On access to information, they argued that availability and access to data was critical for decision-making and priority-setting, but noted that information was currently fragmented across a wide array of sources. There was therefore a need for institutional cooperation to bridge the data gap and share information using the latest technologies, tools and platforms. One such tool is the new global public information service Eye on Earth, launched in Abu Dhabi in December 2011, which is aimed at building a dynamic global source of information through the integration of disparate data sources, supported by a network of networks. International and national institutions, along with the private sector, were encouraged to join the new service.

15. It was also noted that data needed to be generated transparently and on a timely basis and made available to those who needed it most. The Conference on Sustainable Development could support such a process through agreement on enhanced and intensified capacity-building, including the widespread dissemination of best practices and assistance to countries for implementing them. Capacity-building efforts, however, should not only reflect global and national issues, but also acknowledge local contexts and specificities. The Conference should also result in a call for increased investments in education, research and knowledge-generation.

B. Green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication

1. Key points

16. The upcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development provides a once-in-a-generation opportunity to discuss and deliver an action-oriented outcome on the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication.

17. A green economy is viewed as a pathway to or tool for achieving sustainable development, poverty eradication and decent job creation by increasing resource efficiency, supporting the shift to

sustainable consumption and production patterns and facilitating low-carbon development. These efforts will need to be tailored to specific national and local circumstances.

18. The challenges to a green economy transition are varied and many, especially in developing countries. The potential opportunities for integrating the social, environmental and economic dimensions of sustainable development through the green economy approach are, however, considerable.

19. Realizing opportunities and overcoming challenges requires the participation of all stakeholders, locally tailored initiatives and international support for developing countries in the areas of financing, technology and capacity-building. Most important, a green economy must be pro-poor, inclusive and socially equitable, generating benefits for all within planetary boundaries.

2. Challenges

20. The first and foremost challenge that Governments, major groups and other stakeholders face is to improve their understanding of the green economy approach to sustainable development and poverty eradication. There are also concerns over unrestrained market and private sector control of natural resources or the risk of trade protectionism in the name of a green economy. These concerns, if unaddressed or addressed in an unsatisfactory manner, will prevent the uptake of the approach. Greater efforts are needed to promote open dialogue among Governments, major groups and other stakeholders, beyond environmental circles, on the way to the Conference on Sustainable Development and beyond. This includes more public awareness-raising and localized definitions, examples and best practices relating to the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication.

21. In many developing countries, especially the least developed countries, where there is already interest in and commitment to applying the green economy approach, major challenges include a lack of financial resources to invest in a green economy transition, a lack of access to appropriate and affordable technologies, a lack of access, especially by landlocked and mountainous countries, to external markets for their environment-friendly products and a lack of institutional capacity.

22. At the policy level, the most significant challenge is for Governments to provide a level playing field through appropriate and reliable regulatory frameworks, the reform of fiscal policies such as subsidies and taxes and the stimulation of green investment. This is not simple, however, as there are powerful vested interests that benefit from the status quo. Without substantial political will, green economy efforts may not survive the opposition of these interests. In such a case, significant resources will continue to flow into inefficient, inequitable and unsustainable use of natural resources, reducing the resources available for poverty reduction, education and health.

“It is not a question of whether we can afford a green economy, but whether we can afford not to have one.”

23. Another major policy challenge is to ensure a fair, just and socially inclusive green economy transition. The green economy approach will necessarily involve the transformation of economic structure, which will create winners and losers. If there is a lack of proactive labour policy and social protection, there will be strong resistance to a green economy transition. More important, it will defeat one of the major objectives of greening the economy – to improve human well-being and social equity.

24. These challenges to the implementation of the green economy approach, however, must be overcome in order to address much larger developmental and environmental challenges, including persistent poverty, food security, high unemployment and poor-quality jobs, unsustainable natural resource use and climate change and its impacts on developing countries.

3. Opportunities

25. The green economy approach is expected to bring benefits not only in environmental terms, but also in social and economic terms. Investing in renewable energies and the greening of the construction sector, for example, have been shown to have the potential to create new jobs and new markets while improving health benefits and reducing climate change risks and impacts. Improved ecosystems, energy security and sustainable agriculture are also important, especially for poverty reduction in developing countries. Many activities under the green economy approach can provide new opportunities for women to become key players in local economies, especially in the energy, land management and water sectors.

26. One particular opportunity that the green economy approach can offer is support for a shift to sustainable consumption and production patterns. By encouraging the redirection of investment into related activities, the green economy approach helps reinforce the case for this shift to sustainable consumption and production with not only environmental justification, but also social and economic justification.

“What is needed is the political will to act and to act now.”

27. Redirecting investment is possible. There are national-level examples of collecting environmental and natural resource taxes, reforming subsidy and tax policies, with the aim of ensuring that the revenue collected is used for green and sustainable initiatives, and redirecting public funds into environmental investments in the form of loans and credits. There are also experiences of swapping debt for environmental spending and using public procurement to incentivize the green economy transition by the business sector.

28. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development will provide a historic opportunity for all stakeholders to strengthen governance at both the national and international levels, to cultivate shared objectives and to take collective action. The involvement of key actors and coordinated action is important to ensure that the green economy is socially inclusive and engages Governments at all levels, civil society and the private sector. In addition, the discussions on green economy road maps, national green economy strategies, sustainable development goals, the development of a knowledge-sharing platform, the creation of an institutional framework and a compendium of commitments are important in the lead-up to the Conference. These activities and consultation processes are providing the space for all stakeholders, including the United Nations system, the Bretton Woods institutions and other organizations, to explore new ways of working together.

4. Key points

29. The green economy is a pathway to achieving fair, equitable and sustainable development and poverty eradication. For the green economy to work, however, it must respect the Rio principles and other important concepts, including social and environmental justice among and within countries. In addition, each country should have its own green economy models tailored to national and local development aspirations, priorities, circumstances and stages of technological development.

30. A green economy transition requires first and foremost a participatory process in which all stakeholders – Governments at the national and local levels, businesses, civil society, local communities, small agricultural producers, women and young people – are fully empowered and engaged in setting goals and targets, defining policies and instruments and taking action to shift to sustainable consumption and production. The major groups and stakeholders, especially women and young people, are assets in designing enabling conditions for achieving sustainable development.

“To succeed in a green economy we will need green heads (for ideas), green hearts (for commitment) and green hands (for action).”

31. In addition, there is a need for strategies and policies to be comprehensive and undertaken across Government agencies. It is important to focus on removing barriers to a green economy transition and aligning existing policies, budgets and investments across sectors.

32. The international community has the obligation to support developing countries in their green economy transitions. Support is needed in the area of financial resources, clean technologies, public awareness, peacebuilding, capacity-building, including skills training, and the development of institutional and regulatory frameworks. In addition, the international community should resist trade protectionism and conditionality on development assistance disguised as green economy measures. It should provide support for market access, allowing green goods and services to expand in volume. On technology, it is important to recognize the role of indigenous knowledge and technologies, such as those used in mountain and agricultural communities, and of culture and ethics in fostering sustainable behaviours.

33. UNEP has an important role to play in providing much-needed international support to developing countries, such as through the sharing of lessons, knowledge, best practices and operational models of a green economy across various sectors and levels of society. Another major area of support is the facilitation of the setting of goals based on existing international commitments, including the Millennium Development Goals. Targets for gender mainstreaming should also be

concluded. This also includes work to better measure well-being, progress and prosperity beyond gross domestic product, covering all three pillars of sustainability.

“We need to make sure that the future we want is the future that we get.”

34. The Conference on Sustainable Development must be an event of hope and action and not merely a statement of aspirations. It should be bold and result in the urgent delivery of a strong framework for action with measurable goals and indicators, providing the foundation for an adaptable, flexible and customized approach to achieving a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication.

C. Institutional framework for sustainable development

1. Major points raised

35. While the contribution of UNEP to sustainable development was recognized, there was overwhelming support for the view that urgent change is needed in the current system of international environmental governance. Incremental reform has been too slow and has not addressed the nature or the severity of environmental issues facing the world, but there remain questions as to the exact architecture of a reformed environmental governance system.

36. The way in which sustainable development has been addressed since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 has been inadequate. Many multilateral environmental agreements have been adopted and programmes established, but there is a lack of financial resources, adequate monitoring and review mechanisms to support implementation.

37. The strengthening of the environmental component of the institutional framework for sustainable development found broad support among the ministers and other heads of delegation. Many expressed support for the establishment of a specialized agency for the environment. Others expressed support for strengthening UNEP but suggested that changing UNEP to a specialized agency could weaken it.

38. There was general agreement that “time is not on our side”. The Conference on Sustainable Development must result in quick and immediate action to respond to the current environmental crisis. Speakers stressed that there should be a clear decision on the institutional framework for sustainable development and international environmental governance.

2. Challenges

“There is a crying need to put some order into international environmental governance.”

39. The current system of international environmental governance is fragmented, weak and incoherent; it lacks leadership and is characterized by the inefficient use of resources. In a world of scarce resources, a strengthened structure for the environment needs to combine various sources of financing. There is an urgent need to forge a stronger link between global environmental policy and global environmental financing.

40. There is agreement that sustainable governance needs to be strengthened, but participants expressed uncertainty about how the three pillars could best be integrated and balanced. There was concern that each of the three pillars of sustainable development should be given equal strength.

3. Opportunities

“The window of opportunity only opens once in a while. Today we find ourselves far short of what is needed.”

41. Reform of the system should address the current shortcomings and may include: an anchor organization with universal membership; improving the science-policy interface; providing guidance to and coordinating multilateral environmental agreements; enhanced synergies within multilateral environmental agreement clusters to increase their effectiveness and efficiency; and the development of a United Nations system-wide strategy for the environment that sets priorities, decides on the division of labour, assigns roles to relevant actors and links private investment and public policy. The establishment of a system of assessed contributions for the international environmental governance anchor institution would increase the total volume of available resources.

42. Synergies between multilateral environmental agreements afford an opportunity to realize the more efficient use of resources and to tackle environmental issues more effectively at the national and international levels and in delivering on the ground, among other things. In addition to seeking to make administrative savings, Governments should also look at opportunities for programmatic synergies, which can bring even greater benefits. A strengthened UNEP could focus on supporting the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements at the national level through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework process, assist multilateral environmental agreements in gaining access to financing from the Global Environment Facility and enable biodiversity-related and other multilateral environmental agreements to use capacity-building mechanisms through the intergovernmental platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services, when established, for their parties.

43. The Conference on Sustainable Development represents a unique window of opportunity to strengthen UNEP through better capacity-building and sustained funding. An important measure for securing sufficient, predictable and coherent funding is the establishment of a stronger link between global environmental policymaking and financing.

44. Local authorities are already closely involved in issues relating to sustainable development; their enhanced participation in global policymaking and the implementation of international decisions at the local level can therefore substantially enhance sustainable development.

45. One opportunity to incorporate human rights and enhance the principles of equity in the institutional framework for sustainable development could be pursued through the creation of an ombudsperson for future generations, at both the international and national levels, equipped with sufficient resources to fulfil that role.

46. There is a need to improve the participation of major groups and stakeholders in decision-making processes and national implementation with a view to improving accountability and transparency as one key issue for sustainable development. This could be achieved through a global instrument implementing principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and through the reform of the governance of existing bodies.

4. Key points

“The time for action has come.”

47. One proposal highlighted the need for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development to adopt a decision on international environmental governance and the institutional framework for sustainable development.

48. There is a need to put in place promptly a strengthened international environmental governance system, with a strong mandate and political visibility, able to fulfil the key functions that are needed to address the environmental challenges that the world faces today.

49. In order to preserve the environment for current and future generations, it is necessary to transcend national interests and select what is best for the global community.

II. United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and beyond: responding to the challenges

Key points

50. All three pillars of sustainable development are intertwined like a three-dimensional helix structure, and environment is a key integrating link. Sustainable development must integrate the three pillars into one agenda with strong bonds such that it does not break down.

51. Environment ministers alone cannot implement the sustainable development agenda. There is a great need to engage with finance, planning and development ministries and persuade them that an inclusive green economy is necessary for economic development.

52. A smooth transition to a green economy will lead to smart development that includes safeguards to protect vulnerable communities and ensure socially inclusive growth.

53. Our collective measure of wealth must go beyond GDP to include environmental and social dimensions to capture human well-being more accurately.

54. A new institutional infrastructure should be based on functional needs. We must take a fresh look at the role of civil society. We need to move out of our comfort zone and better engage the private sector in decision-making processes.

55. UNEP must be strengthened, including through universal membership and sustainable financing.
56. We need to remove our mental “square brackets” at the Conference on Sustainable Development so that we can take advantage of the opportunities to move forward on the sustainable development of the entire planet for all people in an equitable way.
57. It is a fundamentally different world from the world of 1992. New interconnectivity technologies allow us to tap into the knowledge and imagination of a wider and broader set of actors. At the Conference, Governments must commit themselves to robust accountability, including by establishing specific monitoring mechanisms such as an early warning system that will alert us to problems in implementation. Decision-making must be more transparent.

Appendix

Summaries of plenary, panel, round-table and breakfast sessions

The compendium of summaries below should be considered as working documents which helped the President of the Governing Council of UNEP in the preparation of his President's Summary of the Ministerial Consultations. The summaries were prepared by the Moderators, Facilitators and Co-chairs of each session with the assistance of the UNEP Secretariat.

The summaries of the different sessions are a reflection of the interactive dialogue that occurred between Ministers and other heads of delegation attending each session of the Ministerial Consultations. They reflect the ideas presented and discussed rather than consensus view of participants, hence they are not negotiated documents.

The compendium is issued without formal editing.

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1. Symposium “Environmental change and global responses in 2012”

Monday, 20 February 2012, 3 p.m. - 6 p.m. Conference room 1

<p>Chair:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President of the Governing Council of UNEP <p>Introductory remarks by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professor Sir Robert Watson, Chief Scientist, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, United Kingdom <p>Facilitator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professor Jacqueline McGlade, Executive Director, European Environment Agency
<p>Presentation of highlights of GEO-5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Fatoumata Keita-Ouane, Division on Early Warning and Assessment, UNEP
<p>Panel discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.E. Ms. Razan Khalifa Al Mubarak, Secretary General, Environment Agency, Abu Dhabi • H.E. Ms. Izabella Teixeira, Minister for Environment, Brazil • H.E. Dr. You Young Sook, Minister of Environment, Republic of Korea • H.E. Ms. Mercedes Bresso, President of the Committee of the Regions of the European Union
<p>Dialogue with former Executive Directors: “1972-2012. A Review of the Evolution of Global Environmental Policy and Institutional Architecture”</p> <p>Keynote speech by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.E. Ms. Lena Ek, Minister of Environment, Sweden • Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Secretary General of the African, Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP) Group of States. <p>Moderated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Achim Steiner, Executive Director UNEP and United Nations Under-Secretary-General <p>Reflections by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Maurice Strong, former Executive Director UNEP (1972-1975). (Written statement) • Dr. Mostafa Tolba, former Executive Director UNEP (1975-1992) • Ms. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, former Executive Director UNEP (1992-1998) • Dr. Klaus Töpfer, former Executive Director UNEP (1998-2006)

Summary of the panel discussion “Environmental change and global responses in 2012”.

Support the establishment of more effective environmental goals

- Sustainable development should be considered as a societal value that requires democracy, and equity. Rio+20 should take the spirit of the Rio Earth Summit and apply it to the new world we live in today, adopt specific goals and thereby provide a chance to restart the process of sustainable development by creating economic and political incentives to eradicate poverty and improve the environment. Economy and ecology can work together in the context of sustainable development.
- Internationally agreed goals are only partially being met and this needs to be addressed. The achievement of global environmental sustainability goals depends on the availability of economic, environmental and social data and information. However the data are fragmented across a wide array of sources. There is thus a need for institutional cooperation, not just within the scientific community but across other sectors as well, to bridge the data gap and share information using the latest technology tools and platforms.
- The Eye on Earth Summit held in Abu Dhabi (Dec 2011) focusing on bridging the data and information gap drew attention to the need for better integration and sharing of economic, environmental and social data and information, as well as improved access to information by decision-makers and the public.
- It is imperative to act now. Evidence shows that environmental deterioration is continuing, and that as a consequence environmental goals are only being partially met and our current pathway will not achieve sustainable development.
- There is growing recognition that emissions of greenhouse gases remain the biggest risk to sustainable development and the rate of biodiversity loss is unprecedented in 65 years.
- To be successful, Rio+20 should focus on important issues across the most critical sectors, for example water and energy, to develop concrete steps forward in terms of the environmental policies that are needed.

Bridging the data gap and improving information accessibility

- Availability and access to data and information for decision-making and priority-setting is critical and in order to be effective data need to be shared, especially within national policy frameworks. Global cooperation can also be improved using opportunities to build on existing networks.
- The rate of data generation especially in developing countries lags behind the policy framework; data need to be generated in a transparent way and on a timely basis, and made available to those who need it. Building knowledge should reflect not only global and national scales but also local context and community.
- International and national institutions including the private sector are invited to join the global public information service Eye on Earth to build a dynamic global source of information through the integration of disparate data sources and supported by a network of networks. The power of the internet/web must be harnessed to communicate with policymakers and decision-makers at all levels.
- The UNCSD could address this issue through enhanced and intensified capacity-building to enable countries to bridge the data gap and improve information accessibility. Some Member States and major groups have called for a global convention on this matter.
- There is a need to learn through action and experience - there should be widespread dissemination of best practice policies and assistance for countries to implement these. Acknowledge that there are different ways of learning in different cultures.
- Continue to build the Global Environment Outlook from national State of Environment assessments to inform the regional picture and global outlook.
- The science-policy interface should be strengthened.

Modifying the current model for economic growth with the engagement of all stakeholders

- The current economic model and environmental governance systems are unlikely to reverse the current trends in the deterioration of the environment. There is a need to further define and clarify the green economy to promote consensus and facilitate mainstreamed into the economy. Developed countries can assist by sharing their experiences of green economy initiatives with developing countries.
- A strategy for a green economy should be developed in accordance with each country's specific context.
- There should be global cooperation between developing and developed countries and the public and private sector for the green economy initiative to be successful.
- Current trends in population growth and consumption are not sustainable and public action is required on a scale never seen before. There is an urgent need to break the link between consumption and production and environmental degradation and to stop depleting our natural capital.
- There is a need to value ecosystem services (market and non-market elements) and to develop a greater understanding of natural accounting. This should serve as the basis for a green economy and the transition to a global low-carbon economy. This will involve removing perverse subsidies, for example, in the energy and agricultural sectors.
- Youth will need to take action, the international community now needs to provide responsible policies and programmes and set a path, a direction and a narrative for the future.
- Act locally – think globally. It is now time to move towards action and support multi-level governance for policy development including local authorities and develop a bottom-up approach for the green economy to create local jobs and benefits.
- There should be increased investments in education, research and knowledge generation.
- Technology transfer is required between developed and developing countries especially for sustainable energy because it drives much of the current development.
- We need to re-think the current perspective of growth – moving beyond GDP – to full capital accounting for natural, human, social and cultural, financial and built capital, which would enable countries to have a greater appreciation of their real wealth.

Summary of the dialogue with former Executive Directors

Major points of discussion

- This meeting brought together the three former Executive Directors of UNEP – Mr. Mostafa Tolba, Ms. Elizabeth Dowdeswell and Mr. Klaus Töpfer – to share reflections and lessons learned from their respective tenures in the organization. The discussion, which was moderated by the current Executive Director, Achim Steiner, covered issues from the inception of UNEP in Stockholm in 1972 to Rio 1992, Johannesburg 2002, and to its present state and the road to Rio+20 in June 2012.
- Stockholm was an opportunity to present a “southern” position on global environmental issues. In Rio in 1992, the discourse changed and the concept “sustainable development” was brought in to link environment and development. Civil society had a voice and was heard throughout the United Nations system.
- Johannesburg in 2002 brought in the much-needed focus on implementation, and the need to address international environmental governance and sustainable development was highlighted in all relevant United Nations, agencies and programmes.
- The understanding of the importance of healthy ecosystems and environment and their link to improve human well-being emerged at Rio 1992 and in Johannesburg in 2002. However, a clear definition of sustainable development was not provided and we are still facing the same problems as we did 40 years ago.
- The pros and cons of transforming UNEP into a specialized agency were also debated by the speakers: one mentioned the importance of recognizing the environment as a cross-cutting issue and that a specialized agency might prevent collaboration on a cross-cutting environmental approach within sister agencies. Another mentioned the need to focus on action and implementation towards achieving sustainable development but that a specialized agency would certainly send the right message among agencies.

Challenges

The speakers noted the following main challenges:

- Issues such as land degradation, climate change, biodiversity loss and sea-level rise are looming global problems/concerns.
- Developmental and equity concerns need to be addressed. The importance of the social dimension needs to be understood.
- There is a need for radical change in our current economic system, including through linking science and policy and establishing the true value of ecosystem services.
- UNEP continues to be handicapped by inadequate financial support.
- There is a need to avoid parallel processes, duplication of effort or the creation of new international bureaucracies.
- UNEP was vibrant after Rio 1992 but was not given the tools to implement the large number of decisions that were taken during the conference. As a result, numerous institutions, including multilateral environmental agreement (MEA) secretariats and others, became independent of UNEP.
- We have the same problems today, simply because the last 40 years have talked about what needs to be done and why things should be done – but not how to do it. Governments need concrete proposals and methodology on how to establish a more equitable society. We should reach Rio with readily developed concrete measures.
- Governments prefer to deal with evolutionary changes and not with revolutionary ones.

Opportunities

- Strengthening UNEP globally will enhance coordination and implementation of multilateral environmental agreements, e.g. chemicals and wastes, and would also send a strong signal within the United Nations system that the institutional arrangements to tackle sustainable development are being established.

- The theme of sustainable development is recognized as an overarching goal at national, regional and international levels; this can be achieved through “environment for development”.
- UNEP must be at the forefront of sustainable development goals and ensure that the “culture” of sustainable development is not lost.
- Lessons were learned in the last 40 years through the lens of Stockholm, Rio and Johannesburg, on which the current dialogue towards Rio+20 can build.
- Collaboration is needed making use of existing institutions: Rio+20 has to find a way to enhance cooperation among governments and agencies.
- There is a need to link economy and environment.
- There is the need to reintegrate people and the social and cultural dimension into the sustainability discussion.
- UNEP needs to stand strong and continue its work on emerging issues and science-based work, including analysis and assessments. UNEP needs to retain its agility being a leader on these issues but increase its work on the social dimensions.
- There is an urgent need for UNEP to go to Rio with concrete methods of how to achieve sustainable development.
- Environment needs a new boost and we need a stronger voice at UNEP, which should emerge as a world environment organization (WEO) in order to be also able to mainstream environment into health and security related issues.

High-level political messages from the session

There were two key political messages: support for a specialized agency and sceptics of a specialized agency:

- Creating a specialized agency would send a message to the system on the authoritative approach that UNEP needs to take. Rio+20 is a unique opportunity to make the “change of course”, to ensure cooperation amongst all sectors to ensure Earth’s sustainability. Developmental and equity concerns need to be addressed through adding the social dimension. There is an urgent need to strengthen UNEP if we are to empower the world. Environment needs a new boost and we need a stronger voice at UNEP, which should emerge as a WEO in order to be also able to mainstream environment into health and security related issues.
- A specialized agency is not the solution but continued discussion about it distracts policymakers from the real issues at hand. Endorse a specialized agency at Rio or stop talking about it. Time to call the discussion on a specialized agency to a close because environment is not a sector, it is cross cutting. As a specialized agency, UNEP would become a mere sector. The current weakness of UNEP is that it does not have any authority to legislate or follow up on non-compliance by governments.
- A need to think of the Millennium Sustainable Development Goals - and not just the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) - which follow the idea of the sustainable development goals (SDGs).
- “Environment for development” as a motto in order to overcome the globalization stress.

2. Breakfast event: Briefing and open dialogue with the Secretariat of the UNCSD on the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

Tuesday, 21 February 2012, 8:30 a.m. - 10 a.m. Conference room 12

Facilitator:

- Ms. Christine von Weizsaecker, President of Ecoropa (European Network on Ecological Reflection)

Welcome remarks:

- Mr. Sha Zukang, Secretary General of UNCSD, United Nations Under-Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs

Special guests:

- Mr. Brice Lalonde, Executive Coordinator for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development
- Professor Bedrich Moldan, Vice-Chair of the Bureau of the Preparatory Committee for UNCSD
- Dr. Paolo Soprano, Director Division for Sustainable Development and Civil Society Relations, Director-General for Sustainable Development, Climate and Energy, Ministry of Environment, Italy and Vice-Chair of the Bureau of the Preparatory Committee for UNCSD

Presentation by the host country, Brazil (from 9:30 a.m. to 10 a.m.)

- Representative of the host country

Summary of the breakfast event: Briefing and open dialogue with the Secretariat of the UNCSD on the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

Major points of discussion

Implementation is key in Rio, as well as integration

Rio+20 outcomes may include the following:

- Renewed commitments, including framework for action. This would include the road map for a green economy and a toolkit of lessons learned and best practices; and the adoption of a framework of aspirational sustainable development goals (SDGs).
- A robust institutional framework for sustainable development: to transform UNEP into a specialized Agency with universal membership, as per one of the options put forward, with the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) elevated to a sustainable development council, reporting to the General Assembly (similar to the Human Rights Council) with the mandate to review progress on implementation. On the CSD, we are looking at elevating it into sustainable development council as one option but others are on the table.
- A register of voluntary commitments and initiatives launched at Rio.
- A declaration to be negotiated, hence the importance of civil society inputs into the Conference, and the way those would be channelled is as important as the negotiations.
- On the green economy, we are looking for practical results and moving away and shifting from the current economic system, with a clear road map on the reform of the governance structures and a framework for international action.

Sustainable Development Goals

- One of the most promising parts of discussion will be on SDGs. The key questions will be: How do we merge with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)? How do we agree on the process and focus areas? What could be post-2015 goals? There is common agreement that an initiative like Sustainable Energy for All is one that could inspire.
- Talking about roles and responsibilities, “diplomats and doers”. What is the role of the national Governments and policymaker, in this SDG framework? What could be principles upon which to build the SDGs?
- Regarding SDGs, monitoring will be key, and the question is how to make the monitoring equitable? Through “soft pressure”, i.e., voluntary monitoring, peer review, but also with a hard reporting obligation.

Participation by all major groups and stakeholders

- Take this process to another level and this is civil society, including business and industries, local authorities. Rio could open several tracks on many issues, like cities, for example.
- The contribution of business and of local authorities will be critical with regard to the register of voluntary commitments and initiatives launched at Rio.
- Exploring the diversity and variety of expertise and knowledge from the nine major groups and stakeholders, e.g., the science and technological community in bringing into the whole sustainable development debate indicators for proper monitoring, and working on the concept of planetary boundaries and how to accommodate humanity within a safe space for environmental security.
- Participation in Rio around concrete commitments by major groups and stakeholders, business and local authorities in particular would be good achievement. Therefore, achieving a full complementarity between commitments by Member States and civil society organizations would be a good achievement, and the opportunity for discussions would be during the Dialogue Days proposed by Brazil.
- National level preparation of civil society organizations, as it is important to get the public opinion to be aware of the Rio conference and challenges we are facing.

Implementation

- Recreating a multilateral process like the Rio process takes half a generation, so we need to get sufficiently strong results for Rio+20 not to be proclaimed a failure. There is a need to create the structure and facilities to promote action between diplomats and doers; to create a fair and equitable playing field.
- On the green economy, we are looking for practical results and moving away and shifting from the current economic system, with a clear road map on the reform of the governance structures and a framework for international action.
- The green economy road map and its framework for international action: concerned about tension, since we acknowledge that there is not a “one size fits all” approach but rather a range of options for countries to adapt to their realities.
- Realign science research with sustainable development: an interdisciplinary and capacity-building platform to be launched at Rio+20 and listed as potential outcome of Rio+20.
- There is a constant tension between the functioning of a global community and rich diversity of countries. We should devise a commonly agreed methodology and language to implement our commitments, our “menu”. Countries would then select the item on the menu they want to implement and decide on the how.
- Appeal for concrete and practical solutions, and involvement of public opinion. Our best achievement would be to implement the already agreed goals.

Challenges

- Building common understanding of the commitments required, as well as identification of the implementation challenges.
- Channelling the inputs of civil society into the conference. Rio+20 is not just about Government action but also civil society and major groups and stakeholders.
- Agreeing potentially on a few elements, but certainly on a road map and process for coming up with a consolidated set of post-2015 sustainable development goals, with proper mechanisms and structure for monitoring, going beyond the voluntary peer review.
- Map out the roles and responsibilities of national institutions and decision-making, major groups and stakeholders, including local authorities and business, in a post-2015 SDG framework.
- Implementation of all the agreed goals over the past 20 years is key, but the fundamental question is that we need institutions and tools, including the solid financial basis to support implementation. There is a need for a supportive environment for decision-making with clear incentives, proper accountability mechanisms and governance systems.

Opportunities

- The dialogue on the SDGs presents tremendous opportunities in terms of addressing sustainability and the actual integration of the three pillars of sustainable development.
- Rio+20 provides an opportunity to work on the concept of planetary boundaries and how to accommodate humanity within a safe space and for environmental security.
- The transition to a green economy in the context of poverty eradication and sustainable development provides an opportunity to move away and shift from the current economic systems, with a clear road map and an international framework for action.
- The establishment of a register of voluntary commitments and initiatives both from Governments and from major groups and stakeholders that would be fully complementary, and could support the implementation process.

High-level political messages from the session

- Rio+20 cannot fail: recreating such process takes half a generation and there is a huge sense of urgency, to create a fair and equitable playing field to achieve sustainable development.
- Rio+20 must deliver on action-oriented and implementable outcomes, on an inclusive green economy that will take equity and social justice into account. Practical solutions have to be identified, and the general public involved and aware of the global challenges facing us.

- Participation of major groups and stakeholders in Rio is key. Therefore, achieving full complementarity between commitments by Member States and Civil Society Organizations would be a good achievement, and the opportunity for discussion would be during the proposed Dialogue Days by Brazil.

3. Ministerial round-table discussion on the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication

Tuesday, 21 February 2012, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. Conference room 1

<p>Chair:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President of the Governing Council of UNEP <p>Keynote speaker:</p> <p>Mr. Elliott Harris, Special Representative to the United Nations, International Monetary Fund</p>				
<p>Panel Moderator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Sha Zukang, Secretary-General of UNCSD, Under-Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs 				
<p>Composition of the panel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.E. Ms. Edna Molewa, Minister of Water and Environment Affairs, South Africa • H.E. Mr. Janez Potočnik, Commissioner for the Environment, European Union • Mr. Najib Saab, Secretary-General, Arab Forum for Environment and Development 				
Round table A	Round table B	Round table C	Round table D	Round table E

Summary of the panel discussion on green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication

Major points of discussion

- Ambassador Sha opened the plenary discussions by noting the importance of delivering an action-oriented outcome at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) and warning that the current economic model has not delivered economic development for all and has put the planet in peril. He noted that greening the economy can serve as a vehicle for sustainable development and poverty eradication.
- Panellists also noted that there is no single approach to greening economies, and that there are a variety of instruments that are available to countries. There was agreement on the need to focus on implementation, and providing the necessary tools to countries to transform their economies, creating new employment opportunities while position themselves for a resource constrained world.
- Many of the speakers emphasized the need to incorporate the dimension of social inclusion and participation in setting goals and targets for greening their economies. Commissioner Potočník indicated that Rio+20 must be a first step in moving towards a green and socially inclusive economy.

Challenges

- In his remarks, Ambassador Sha noted that the concept of green economy is not without its concerns including the influence of unrestrained markets over natural resources and the risk of trade protectionism. Others noted the need for an active governmental role to provide safeguards in this respect. Egypt and Iran noted the need for a better understanding of the concept through increased dialogue on the way to Rio.
- Many of panellists focused on the need for a “just transition” to a green economy. Elliot Harris spoke of anticipating and identifying potential losers from a shift to a greener economy, and others including Najib Saab and Commissioner Potočník noted the need to take measures to help protect the socially vulnerable groups.
- The need to create decent work was underlined as a specific challenge by Mr. Saab, who noted that unemployment remains a huge challenge for the Arab region. He signalled the potential for the renewable energy and construction sector to create hundreds of thousands of new jobs as part of greening of their economies.
- Elliott Harris noted that a central challenge to greening the economy was creating a level playing field by introducing full cost pricing of economic activities. He indicated that this will need to be coupled with appropriate regulation, setting fiscal policy, such as subsidies and taxes, and investment. Reliable markets and predictable regulatory regimes are needed to stimulate investments, he noted, but significant social and political challenges must be overcome: change will require substantial political will to overcome vested interests in the brown economy.

Opportunities

- Many noted that green economy can be a means of expediting progress towards sustainable development and offers a unique opportunity for integrating the three pillars of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental). Moreover, green economy can also be a bridge to sustainable development and poverty eradication but developing countries will need to be supported through financing, capacity building, and technology transfer.
- Mr. Elliott noted that while international coordination will be required in some areas – such as financing and technology transfer, and capacity-building – that there is much that can be done at the national level to begin the process of greening economies. In this regard, Minister Molewa from South Africa noted the advances her country had made, recently launching a Green Fund to finance targeted investments in greening their economy.
- Ambassador Sha highlighted that Rio+20 provides a unique opportunity to achieve sustainable development and also noted that there is governmental momentum in the lead up to Rio+20, including through discussions taking place on a green economy road map, national green economy strategies, sustainable development goals (SDGs), development of a knowledge platform, creation of an institutional framework, among other issues.

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- Mr. Harris suggested the need for a more solid institutional framework –new ways of working together and measuring progress. UNEP should be working closely with the ILO and other United Nations and Bretton Woods agencies to facilitate and support a transition for countries. In this regard, Minister Molewa from South Africa indicated that the United Nations should play an active role in supporting countries in modelling and developing transition pathways, building on the work of UNEP on the science-policy interface.

High-level political messages from the session

- Ambassador Sha emphasized that at Rio+20 governments must be bold and deliver a strong framework for action for delivering on sustainable development. But time is of the essence and we must get to work: there are only 21 negotiating days left before Rio.
- Speakers noted the urgent challenge of developing a concrete plan of action for Rio that will allow countries to move forward in greening their economies, and the short span of time available for doing so. Specific calls for action were for knowledge sharing and best practices, providing modelling and similar advisory services, such as what UNEP is providing to South Africa, and job and skills training. It should also help to develop and pursue new forms of sustainable consumption and production.
- Speakers noted the need for new indicators and metrics to define economic performance and prosperity. They stressed the need to go beyond GDP, and develop clear goals and targets for Rio, which could cover issues such as waste, oceans, and land degradation.

Summary of ministerial round-table discussion on the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication (Round table A)

Co-Chairs

- H.E. Dr. Pema Gyamtsho, Minister of Agriculture and Forests, Bhutan.
- H.E. Mr. Samuela Alivereti Saumatua, Minister of Local Government, Urban Development, Housing and Environment, Fiji.

Major points of discussion

- Green economy was viewed as a means to achieving sustainable development by increasing resource efficiency, sustainable consumption and production, and facilitating the transition to low-carbon development.
- It was noted that equity and poverty eradication must continue to be at the heart of sustainable development.
- Developing countries recognized a need for three key elements for their countries to achieve a transition to a green economy: technology transfer, financing and capacity-building. Some countries expressed the view that technology transfer must be on a voluntary basis and on mutually agreed terms and conditions, and reaffirmed their commitment to working to ensure that countries have access to the technology to mitigate and adapt to climate change and other environmental challenges.
- Delegates emphasized that green economy cannot be defined as one prescriptive pathway but rather that the green economy transition would need to be tailored to national circumstances with policy space for individual countries to develop nationally-appropriate policies.
- Finally, some delegates expressed support for a “whole of government” approach to support the transition to a green economy to develop and implement new programmes. The successful interventions on cleaner production and developing new initiatives on e-waste were cited as examples.

Challenges

- Poverty levels and food security were highlighted as major challenges for developing countries, so green economy approaches will need to take a holistic approach to poverty reduction and eradication.
- Participants raised the need to include women, indigenous peoples and their traditional knowledge, youth, the private sector and the specific circumstances of the urban economy in the plans for a green economy. Some countries highlighted the need to include the health of the oceans and sustainable management of fisheries as important part of a green economy.
- There is a risk that a green economy will be perceived as being imposed on developing countries by developed countries unless the concept is demystified and developing countries can deconstruct the concept to make it relevant to their own challenges and situation.
- It was noted that any framework of action for a green economy must be anchored in the concepts of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and should not include timelines without due consideration for feasibility and means of achievement. Moreover, it was noted that measures should not restrict trade.

Opportunities

- Rio+20 provides a unique opportunity for significant change and the outcomes need to be ambitious and action-oriented.
- Many of the solutions associated with a green economy transition can be found at the national level. Many countries are taking concrete action and there is a clear opportunity to share and exchange these experiences, lessons, technology and best practices. One delegate suggested that UNEP consider supporting the development of regional climate adaptation centres where the sharing of knowledge could be promoted.
- Delegates discussed the importance of multi-stakeholder engagement at all levels to achieve sustainable development goals and transition to a green economy and highlighted the crucial role of engagement with the private sector.

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- Enterprises are key actors, and some delegates indicated that it is important to give an additional economic value to the environment in order to provide green incentives to enterprises, citing examples such as the domestic trading systems of the EU and other countries, and a taxation system for global warming.
 - Countries are already implementing many green economy solutions such as sustainable management in mountainous regions, climate-smart agriculture, management of fisheries and ocean ecosystems, and sustainable forest management.
 - Delegates discussed the issue of targets and indicators beyond GDP measurements that could be used to measure progress towards a green economy and used in corporate reporting systems in order to stimulate policy reforms and investment.
 - The rate of consumption and production in urban areas is growing and a green economy transition must include urban considerations to be successful.

High-level political messages from the session

- Green economy is a pragmatic means for achieving sustainable development and promoting fair, equitable development.
- Rio+20 should be a story of hope and action and not merely a statement of aspirations.
- To succeed in a green economy we will need the “Three Green H’s” - Green Heads (for ideas), Green Hearts (for commitment), and Green Hands (for action).

Summary of ministerial round-table discussion on the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication (Round table B)

Co-Chairs

- H.E. Mr. Anura Priyadarshana Yapa, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Sri Lanka
- H.E. Ms. Graciela Muslera, Minister of Environment, Uruguay

Major points of discussion

- Green economy is not a blueprint. It needs to take into account national circumstances and reflect a bottom-up approach. Social inclusion and participation in the process of identifying priorities in this process was a recurring theme.
- Some expressed that we have sufficient tools and information to make decisions. To be successful green economy needs to be mainstreamed across all sectors with indicators and matrix. Practical examples on best practices are needed to guide the transition and to better understand the concept.
- Despite no agreed definition so far on green economy this concept could represent a tool towards achieving sustainable development. Countries noted diversity of approaches and views, with some countries such as Bolivia and Venezuela pointing out their preference for the term of “ecological economy”, while discussions are still ongoing on this issue.
- Other delegates stressed the need to develop alternative pathways to achieve sustainable development through a holistic approach in harmony with nature, which go beyond using only an economic approach.
- Need to integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development in the concept of green economy, especially focusing on poverty reduction. Measures and indicators need to integrate the different dimensions of sustainable development and look beyond GDP.
- Economic instruments are key to achieving a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication: subsidies that support unsustainable use of natural resources should be redirected towards investments for poverty reduction, education or health, among other key sectors.

Challenges

- Developing countries face additional and fundamental challenges to transition: inadequate financing, technology transfer, weak government structures and intellectual property. In this regard, some pointed out that Bali Strategic Plan has not met its objectives, due to insufficient funding.
- Involvement of key actors and coordinated action is important to succeed, not only because of the need to include local government and civil society in the governance system, but also to provide a clear link between international environmental governance and the green economy in a participatory way.
- Getting the policy framework right is a challenge: funds are currently allocated to inefficient and unsustainable use of natural resources and could be used for poverty reduction, education or health. For example, less than 1 per cent of pension funds that go to infrastructure investments currently support green infrastructure and growth. It represents a huge potential for incentivizing investments towards greener infrastructure instead of unsustainable practices.

Opportunities

- Inclusive and participatory processes are needed to ensure that green economy is socially inclusive and not used for trade protectionism. It should include the role of women as key players in local economy. The zero draft should stress this aspect and recognize the value of women’s unpaid work, especially in the energy, land management and water sectors.
- Green economy represents a possible vision for intelligent growth, decent employment, employment generation, efficient production, promote equity and reduce environmental impact without having to slow growth.
- Empowering traditional indigenous knowledge, e.g. in agricultural practices based on community approaches to sustainable development, represents a necessary and important dimension of building a green economy.

High-level political messages from the session

- Green economy is not a blueprint. It needs to take into account national circumstances and reflect a bottom-up approach. Social inclusion and participation in the process of identifying priorities in this process was a recurring theme.
- Despite no agreed definition so far on green economy this concept could represent a tool towards achieving sustainable development. Countries noted diversity of approaches and views.
- Inclusive and participatory processes are needed to ensure that green economy is socially inclusive and not used for trade protectionism. It should include the role of women as key players in local economy. The zero draft should stress this aspect and recognize the value of women's unpaid work, especially in the energy, land management and water sectors.
- Concept should be sensitive to national circumstances and include the transfer of adequate technologies. Green economy could be a tool to reduce poverty and promote equity in a participatory approach by changing to sustainable consumption and production patterns in the concept of sustainable development.
- Need for stable and reliable regulatory frameworks. Ensure sufficient financial support, application of the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and technology transfer. Role of private sector will be key for a successful transition, especially in the area of technology transfer. Food security must be brought in to ensure sustainable agriculture and nutrition, and greater support provided to small scale farmers.
- Activities to advance a green economy need to be mainstreamed across all sectors and the use of indicators that go beyond GDP and include the three dimensions of sustainable development.

Summary of ministerial round-table discussion on the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication (Round table C)

Co-Chairs

- H.E. Ms. Yoo Young Sook, Minister of Environment, Republic of Korea
- H.E. Mr. Issoufou Isaaka, Minister of Water and Environment, Niger

Major points of discussion

- Most countries initially highlighted green-economy-relevant initiatives taking place within their countries.
- Countries are already undertaking many regional initiatives including in the Congo Basin, the Great Green Wall and other similar initiatives.
- Focus shifted to:
 - (a) How the green economy can address current and future global economic challenges in a world of resources scarcity;
 - (b) Opportunities and challenges in the respective countries;
 - (c) What kind of support from the United Nations system would be required.
- What should be done to ensure a smooth and socially just transition to a green economy.

Challenges

- Social inclusivity and equity were a recurring theme from most speakers.
- Should not include arbitrary and discriminatory actions.
- Should be pro poor, pro-environment.
- The green economy should not substitute for sustainable development but should be a basis to advance sustainable development.
- Not yet acceptable to all (this argument has been made before on the need for a universally acceptable instrument on green economy, such as a treaty).
- Application of the principles of common but differentiated responsibilities, as well as the polluter pays principle.
- Financial architecture to facilitate the transition.
- An absence of metric analysis.
- Technology transfer and the hindrance of intellectual property rights.
- Gender inclusivity.
- Resource intensity of economic systems in advanced countries.

Opportunities

- A green economy complements green growth.
- A green economy can reduce greenhouse gas emissions and effects of climate change.
- Create new environmentally friendly initiatives.
- Green economy can help promote green lifestyles.
- New markets can be created for green technologies.
- Creation of new green jobs.
- Increased ability to adapt to extreme weather events, and climate change impacts.
- Possible emergence of a fair global trading system.
- Increased support for further innovation, research and education.

- More effective public private partnerships.
- The concept of resource efficiency and sustainable production and consumption and the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns can contribute to a transition to a green economy.

High-level political messages from the session

- The green economy should be based on national economic and development priorities and circumstances, including achievement of the MDGs and other internationally agreed goals.
- Behavioural change needed in our economic activities (agriculture, transport, energy).
- Social and environmental justice among countries must be observed with the application of principles such as the polluter pays principle.
- National sovereignty and equality are key principles to be observed.
- Existing international commitments must be complied with.
- The principle of common but differentiated responsibility needs to be observed.
- The principles of the three Rio Conventions should take centre stage.
- The transition to a green economy requires an enabling framework with capacity-building, access to technology and adequate financial resources.
- A green economy must be an economy of globalization, solidarity, development and peace as an essential condition.
- Rio outcomes must include specific targets for gender mainstreaming and support.
- Indicators of progress and measurement frameworks are needed to support a green economy transition.
- A green economy should valorize natural capital and enhance its benefit to communities, in particular rural communities.
- Regional outcomes documents in Africa and Asia-Pacific contain elements to support a green economy transition, but require commitments for international support and collaboration.
- While international cooperation and support are essential, governments must make their own efforts through budgetary policies and greater investment in areas of vital importance to greening their economies.
- Need to strengthen the social and environmental pillars of sustainable development.
- The private sector and civil society can play an important role once sound policy frameworks are in place.
- Addressing issues of water, energy, agriculture and food and nutrition, and desertification is essential.
- Rural communities, small agricultural producers must be given high priority.
- UNEP is invited to undertake activities relating to:
 - (a) Dissemination of good practices;
 - (b) Technology transfer facilitation;
 - (c) The development of an institutional and regulatory structure.

Summary of ministerial round-table discussion on the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication (Round table D)

Chair

- H.E. Mr. George Zedginidze, Minister of Environment Protection, Georgia

Major points of discussion

- Green economy is a means to achieving sustainable development and poverty eradication, but it also carries risks and challenges, in particular in the context of the pressure for rapid poverty eradication.
- Key reform areas:
 - (a) Effective institution to manage green economy transition including better coordination among government agencies and the establishment of legislative bases for green economy;
 - (b) Incentives for change and training of human resources, including the role of education in green transformation;
 - (c) Assessment of results including the need for high-quality statistics to inform policy;
 - (d) Connection between national and international efforts, requiring the dual approach of shared global responsibility as well as efforts at individual country level.
- Business sector can contribute to science and technology and promote green growth. They carry their global value and supply chains with diverse actors. A key enabling factor is the establishment of clear and stable regulatory policy framework so that businesses could make long term green investment plans. Social awareness of issues such as decent work potential from green economy is also a prerequisite for the transition. There is a shared responsibility among governments, businesses, and society at large. Integrated policy and good governance is the key to ensuring that all stakeholders are mobilized for a common effort.

Challenges

- Market access for green products remains a major obstacle for some countries, especially land-locked or mountainous ones. Need to address this obstacle at a regional or subregional level across countries where efforts are contributing to a global transition.
- Need further explanation and discussion of the green economy approach, especially with private sector. In this regard, creating funds for a green economy by developed countries should be a priority to help developing countries. Financial resources are a major requirement for some developing countries to move onto a green economy transition.
- Good governance is also important for a green economy transition. It is a broad concept and should cover the establishment of shared objectives of communities and the engagement of all stakeholders. It also includes the principles of democracy and human rights.

Opportunities

- A green economy transition does not focus on environment only; it has social and economic justifications. Improved ecosystems, energy security and livelihoods are especially important for developing countries. The biggest risk is to keep the status quo.
- On financing for a green economy transition, there is scope for reducing domestic financial resources, for example, by collecting environmental and natural resource taxes and redirecting them to environmental investments in the form of loans and credits. There is also a suggestion to swap sovereign debt for investing in the environment.

High-level political messages from the session

- A green economy transition requires coordinated and sustained efforts by government leaders, civil society and businesses, including the need to refine human well-being.
- International community should support developing countries' green economic transition, including avoiding trade protectionism and conditionality on development assistance disguised as green economy. It should provide support in market access, capacity-building and the transfer of appropriate technology, as well as the promotion of indigenous knowledge, technology, culture

and ethics, including learning the traditional methods of natural resource management from mountain communities and with particular attention to the agricultural sector.

- UNEP should play an active role by summarizing and communicating related experiences globally. It should also bring clean technology, technical assistance, capacity, and public awareness to developing countries. In addition, UNEP should communicate issues on environmental adjustment to GDP. UNEP presence at subregional level and special support to post-conflict countries is also called for.
- National green economy strategies should be based on awareness of the changing consumer demand as well as the transformation in the world economy. In addition, there is a need to go beyond individual sectors, as there is inter-sectoral synergy.
- Investing in women should be considered as a priority in a green economy. This needs to be mainstreamed. It was suggested that there should be a permanent representation of women's groups in the United Nations system.
- Further, the role of education was emphasized as a distinctive and essential factor in the transition to a green economy. In this regard, policies are also needed to remove the barriers such as access to means of production and technologies for youth to have decent jobs and become entrepreneurs in the green economy transition. It was suggested that stronger emphasis on education at all levels be referenced in the (zero draft of the) Rio+20 outcome document.
- Each country should have their own model for green economy based on local circumstances, although it would also be beneficial for countries to share experiences, especially those countries that have achieved some results. UNEP should facilitate this exchange.
- Food security is a top priority. The failure to implement the Johannesburg Plan of Action in this area was pointed out. A comprehensive package focusing on public investments is called for in this area, where the opportunity for ecosystem protection also exists. In this package, the role of public procurement was also identified, targeting at both certified and non-certified organic produce. The United Nations high-level task force on food security could provide the scientific basis for such a package and relevant United Nations bodies could be mandated to take action.
- City and local level: green economy needs to deliver benefits at all levels and for all people within the planetary boundary. Local authority: a key level of implementation is at the city level. Need to ensure urban infrastructure is in line with the green economy approach. Many local authorities are already pioneering green economies. National frameworks should enable efforts at the local level. It was suggested that green urban economies be referenced in the zero draft of the Rio+20 outcome document.

Summary of ministerial round-table discussion on the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication (Round table E)

Co-Chairs

- H.E. Mr. Ville Niinistö, Minister of Environment, Finland
- H.E. Ms. Terezya Luoga Hovisa, Minister of State for Environment, United Republic of Tanzania

Major points of discussion

- Several participants expressed the importance of an inclusive and empowering dialogue with major groups and stakeholders, and an intensified awareness-raising that broadens, at all levels of society and government, the understanding around a green economy. It was recognized that the dialogue should reach across sectors and the society as a whole, especially to the poor, which through the reliance on the natural capital is directly linked to the green economy. It was noted that all levels of society are needed to turn a moment into a movement.
- Enabling conditions were raised by many participants as key to the transition towards a green economy. The highlighted enabling conditions included public procurement and credible and long-term policies and regulations. Further, the role of institutions, which can deal with the various multilateral economic and trade related discussions, was also raised as a critical enabling condition for the transition towards a green economy.
- It was noted that many of the tools and resources are available and that it is a matter of doing more with less and directing these in support of a green economy.
- As a key outcome of Rio+20, the participants called for an action-based plan, which is supported by sustainable development institutions with the mandate and resources to address the crosssectoral nature of a green economy.
- There was a general consensus that the action plan should include time bound goals, and measurable indicators, which measure the transition towards a green economy and complement GDP and measure economic, environmental and social human wellbeing.
- Another common element in the interventions was the understanding of the common but differentiated responsibility and the need for the global community to provide capacity and technological support to developing countries for a rapid transition to a green economy.
- As agenda 21 is still relevant we should take stock of why we failed to deliver it.

Challenges

- Access to green technologies and capacities at various levels of society was raised as a key challenge.
- The examples, models and solutions for a green economy are beginning to emerge but more is needed to be done to share and communicate these amongst countries and major groups and stakeholders.
- More is still needed to be done to increase the understanding of a green economy beyond the environmental circles. This includes clear and localized definitions and examples of what a green economy means for different sectors and levels of society. Of essential importance is public awareness and support for the transition towards a sustainable green economy in order to effectively change patterns of consumption and production.

Opportunities

- Transformation of existing tools and resources (e.g., subsidies and taxes) to support the transition towards a green economy. Providing incentives and using public procurement in speeding up investments in a green economy. Public frameworks and policies should support enhanced private innovation and competitiveness in a green economy.
- Consolidation of various green economy support systems.
- Opportunities provided by agriculture for poverty reduction and a transition towards a green economy.

High-level political messages from the session

- While challenges can be seen there is an overarching commitment towards the green economy as a key solution for sustainable development and poverty reduction. Economy and environment go hand in hand in the long term – economic development, increasingly, dependent on making resource use environmentally sound and limit environmental risks and environmental degradation.
- Lessons learned and models for the operationalization of a green economy, at various levels, are needed and these should be communicated widely across sectors and levels of society. The major groups and stakeholders, especially women and youth, are to be seen as an asset in design of enabling conditions and the transition towards a green economy.
- Funds and technologies are needed to support a rapid and equitable transition towards a green economy in all countries but essential is also to translate existing tools and instruments to align with the green economy transition. Such a use of economic tools would be more effective also in empowering local communities, women and youth in the reduction of poverty.
- These lessons learned, models and funds should be translated, in Rio+20, to an action-based programme with goals and measurable indicators. The action plan should provide for the foundation of an adaptable, flexible and customized approach to the green economy.
- While considering the different national circumstances, Green economy strategies should address different national, local and private development aspirations, be comprehensive, remove market barriers and provide transparent policy certainty.

4. Ministerial round-table discussion on the institutional framework for sustainable development

Tuesday, 21 February 2012, 3 p.m. – 6 p.m. Conference room 1

<p>Chair:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President of the Governing Council of UNEP <p>Keynote speaker:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professor Abdul Hamid Zakri, Science Adviser to the Prime Minister of Malaysia 				
<p>Panel Moderator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.E. Mr. Erik Solheim, Minister of Environment and Development Cooperation, Norway 				
<p>Composition of the panel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.E. Mr. Manuel Pulgar-Vidal, Minister of Environment, Peru • H.E. Mr. Henri Djombo, Minister of Environment, Congo • H.E. Ms. Doris Leuthard, Federal Councillor, Federal Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications, Switzerland • Mr. John Scanlon, Secretary-General, CITES 				
Round table A	Round table B	Round table C	Round table D	Round table E

Summary of the panel discussion on the institutional framework for sustainable development

Major points raised

- There is overwhelming support that change is needed but there remain questions as to the exact architecture of a reformed environmental governance system.
- The way sustainable development has been addressed at the national level after Rio 1992 was inadequate. It would be more effective if States worked through international institutions and cooperated through binding rules with adequate monitoring and review mechanisms.
- One of the key questions in devising a new environmental governance system is how to deal with the administration of MEAs – to what degree will a specialized agency absorb those functions?
- Many agreements have been reached and programmes crafted but often it is the financial resources that are lacking to guarantee the implementation of those programmes.

Challenges

- In a world of scarce resources a strengthened structure for the environment needs to combine different resources, based on assessed and voluntary contributions as well as investment from the private sector.
- There is an urgent need to create a stronger link between global environmental policy and global environmental financing.
- The current system of international environmental governance is fragmented, weak and incoherent and it lacks leadership and is characterized by an inefficient use of resources.
- If there is an epidemic, the WHO will act directly. It is not the General Assembly that States are looking to for help.

Opportunities

- Reform of the system should address the current shortcomings and include: setting up an anchor institution with universal membership; provide guidance to and coordination of MEAs; enhance synergies among MEA clusters to increase their effectiveness and efficiency; develop a United Nations system-wide strategy for the environment, which sets priorities, decides on the division of labour and assigns roles to relevant actors in the system.
- Moving from negotiation to implementation, we need to put in place an effective capacity building mechanism to ensure that developing countries can honour their commitments.
- There is a need for an anchor institution, which can link private investment and public policy.
- The synergies discussion so far has revolved around administrative savings but we should also look at opportunities for programmatic synergies, which can bring even greater benefits. A strengthened UNEP could focus on supporting MEA implementation at the national level through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework process; assist MEAs in accessing GEF finance; enable MEAs to use IPBES capacity-building mechanisms for their parties.
- A reformed system should have a fund that focuses on national implementation of MEA commitments; enhance system-wide synergies through mechanisms such as the Environment Management Group and strengthen partnership with other specialized agencies and non-United Nations bodies.
- In a reformed system the GEF should cover all conventions.

High-level political messages from the session

- The window of opportunity only opens once in a while. Today we find ourselves far short of what is needed. The time for action has come now.
- Since UNEP was established in 1972, the family of institutions has grown but the parents have remained the same. The parents are the States and as such we must recognize that we create the institutions.
- There is a crying need to put some order into international environmental governance.

- We need clear commitment and clear, science-based and measurable goals for sustainability.
- We all live in the same village!

Summary of ministerial round-table discussion on the institutional framework for sustainable development (Round table A)

Chair

- Mr. Karsten Sach, Ministry for the Environment, Conservation of Nature and Nuclear Safety, Germany

Major points raised

- There is a consensus on the need to strengthen UNEP and sustainable development on all levels of governance, including in particular the national and local level.
- There are differing views on how a strengthening should be done. Whether through a UNEO or not, it is important to better define and strengthen the functions of UNEP and thereby to improve implementation, and to work towards a better science-policy interface.
- Discussants highlighted the importance of improving the implementation capacity of UNEP and discussed various means how to do so.

Challenges

- Consensus must be found on the institutional framework.
- Implementation at the national and local level is still insufficient and must be improved, including if possible through local UNEP offices oriented following the example of UNDP, and through practical success stories. UNEP must improve its expertise in implementation on the ground.
- Better funding is key and needed. It will be a challenge to improve funding despite national constraints, e.g., financial crisis.
- There is a need for improving participation of civil society, including participation of women, in decision-making processes, with a view to improving accountability and transparency as one key issue for sustainable development. This could be done for example through a global instrument implementing Principle 10 of the Rio Convention and through better access to justice for civil society stakeholders in national legal systems.
- Other challenges include gender equality and food security as part of the broader sustainable development agenda, which must also take better into account the interests of future generations, e.g., through creating an ombudsman or special envoy.
- Challenge is to get a clear outcome in Rio in order to avoid weakening UNEP in the negotiations following the Rio Conference.
- The science-policy interface must be improved in such a way as to not only acquire better data but also to create ownership within the countries and amongst relevant actors through adequate data validation processes.

Opportunities

- Rio+20 represents a unique window of opportunity for strengthening UNEP, inter alia through better capacity-building, more sustained funding and for improving the science-policy interface.
- Rio is the opportunity to change the structures in such a way as to better integrate environment into a wider sustainable development context, improve policy coherence and to minimize overlaps in functions of various institutions.

High-level political messages from the session

- There is a consensus that there is an urgent need to strengthen UNEP, which should include universal membership and improved financing.
- Rio+20 represents a rare window of opportunity in that regard.
- States must urgently act to find consensus which type of organizational structure will best serve to strengthen UNEP.
- Focus should be not only on institutions, but also on improving the effectiveness and expanding the functions of UNEP.

- The outcome of Rio+20 has to address implementation gaps, including better implementation at the country and local level as well as capacity-building, improved science-policy interface with better data and improved data collection processes.

Summary of ministerial round-table discussion on the institutional framework for sustainable development (Round table B)

Co-Chairs

- H.E. Ms. Adriana Soto, Vice-Minister of Environment, Colombia
- H.E. Ms. Michelle Martínez, Vice-Minister for Environment, Guatemala

Major points raised

- There was a general agreement that “time is not on our side.” Because of the sense of urgency, Rio+20 must take quick and immediate action to respond to the current environmental crisis. Delegates stressed that there should be a clear decision on the institutional framework for sustainable development and international environmental governance.
- There was strong support for strengthening UNEP followed by a discussion on what that should entail.
- The majority of participants suggested that UNEP should be elevated to a specialized agency with increased funding and a stronger mandate for implementation. Some participants questioned whether to turn UNEP into a specialized agency or whether a strengthened could still achieve the desired goals.
- The group also recognized that governance for sustainable development needs to be strengthened, and the group considered elevating the Commission on Sustainable Development to a Council on Sustainable Development or changing the mandate of the Economic and Social Council to include environmental issues and provide it with the authority to set sustainable development policies and review their implementation.
- Major groups and stakeholders urged that there should be increased public participation in international environmental governance and the institutional framework for sustainable development. They also urged to be more involved in the preparations for Rio+20 and any new structures resulting from Rio+20.

Challenges

- There was a question about whether changing the mandate of ECOSOC to include the environment and giving it responsibility for sustainable development would require amending the Charter of the United Nations.
- While there was agreement that a strengthened UNEP or a specialized agency for the environment is desired, there were concerns regarding ensuring either option would receive sufficient funding to carry out its mandate.
- There is agreement that sustainable governance needs to be strengthened, but participants expressed uncertainty about how the three pillars could best be integrated. In particular, there was concern that each of the three pillars of sustainable development should be given equal strength.

Opportunities

- Reforming the system is an opportunity to strengthen the participation of all Major Groups, including indigenous people, women and youth, both in decision-making and implementation at the regional and national levels.
- Incorporating human rights and principles of equity into Multilateral Environmental Agreements could significantly protect vulnerable communities and enhance the success of achieving sustainable development.
- Local authorities are already closely involved with issues relating to sustainable development, therefore their enhanced participation in global policymaking and implementation of international decisions at the local level can substantially enhance sustainable development.
- Another opportunity to enhance the principles of equity is to create the role of an ombudsperson for future generations, both at the regional and/or national level equipped with sufficient resources to fulfil his/her role.

- There was a proposal for a reformed institutional framework for sustainable development to include a body that assesses and monitors new technologies to ensure that they are safe for human health and the environment.

High-level political messages from the session

- Governments at Rio+20 should sincerely consider the valued-added of each option.
- In order to protect current and future generations, it is necessary to transcend national interests and select what is best for the global community.
- At Rio+20, we must make a final decision on international environmental governance and the institutional framework for sustainable development. In addition, we must ensure that within one year any reforms are completed.
- At Rio+20, a decision should be taken stating that UNEP must be strengthened and that a process must be launched to determine whether UNEP should become a specialized agency or whether the mandate of the Economic and Social Council should be changed to incorporate the environmental pillar. The process to make this determination should have a deadline of one year.

Summary of ministerial round-table discussion on the institutional framework for sustainable development (Round table C)

Co-Chairs

- H.E. Mr. Adnan Amin, Director General, International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA)
- H.E. Prof. Balthasar Kambuaya, Minister of Environment, Indonesia

Major points raised

- An outcome of Rio+20 should be that UNEP is transformed into a specialized agency with its role defined and the process for transformation described.
- Agency will not solve all the issues.
- There is support for the African Union decision at 17th meeting for greater support on environmental issues (as well as climate change and sustainable development) including technical support and capacity-building.
- Incremental development has been too slow and has not addressed nature or the severity of environmental issues facing the world.
- Need to include principle 10.
- Upgrading of CSD.

Challenges

- Involving civil society and social elements into environmental decision-making.
- Integrating local government in environmental decision-making within the United Nations system.
- Multi-level government frameworks for the environment.
- If it is transformed it could make it weaker because the more environment becomes important and create conventions etc., governance could become more fragmented.

Opportunities

- A specialized agency will make more efficient use of resources, including synergies between the three Rio Conventions and other United Nations agencies:
- Empowering environmental ministries in decision-making for development and also in setting priorities, and being more responsive to the broader community, will address the current fragmentation of environmental decision making,
- Strengthen the three pillars of sustainable development and the role of the environment in sustainable development including the green economy,
- Strengthen and consolidate the work of UNEP,
- Recognize the contribution of developing countries.

High-level political messages from the session

- Agency is important for the environment and the green economy, which are the engines for sustainable development.
- Rio+20 – now or never, we are dealing with sustainable development in its totality, and time to make decision on a sustainable world.
- Rio is the opportunity since Stockholm – it is now or never, business as usual is no longer good enough (local authorities – major groups and stakeholders).

Summary of ministerial round-table discussion on the institutional framework for sustainable development (Round table D)

Co-Chairs

- Dr. Bindu N. Lohani, Vice-President of the Asian Development Bank
- H.E. Dr. Hasan Mahmud, Minister of Forest and Environment, Bangladesh

Major points raised

- Views were expressed on the importance of using Rio+20 as a unique opportunity to make transformative decisions to put in place an international environmental governance system that is in a position to respond to the evolving environmental challenges of a world that has dramatically changed from 40 years ago, when the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment took place and UNEP was established in 1972.
- While recognizing the outstanding contribution of UNEP, the functions it needs to perform to address such changing needs require reforms to take place for sustainable development to be achieved.
- Many interventions highlighted the need for underlying principles and characteristics of a reformed international environmental governance system that are highlighted in the high level political messages below. Some specific suggestions were also made, such as the establishment of an ombudsperson, a technology assessment mechanism, to strengthen implementation of Rio principles 10 and 15, and a system for finance tracking.
- Several participants strongly supported the upgrading of UNEP into a specialized agency. There are views that the key functions of effective international environmental governance should be supported rather than specific forms. Support for increased participation of non-governmental actors was voiced by several major groups and stakeholders. Strong support was also voiced for the regional and national levels of governance.
- The link between international environmental governance and institutional framework for sustainable development reform was also briefly tackled, with general support that both need to be addressed at Rio+20, which provide a unique opportunity for a decision that cannot be postponed.

Challenges

- Importance of inclusiveness of all countries in decision-making process.
- Development and social concerns must not be overlooked in the efforts to reform international environmental governance.
- Recognition that international environmental governance as structured today is not in a position to respond to the environmental challenges of today's world and to country needs. In that respect the challenge of international environmental governance reform goes beyond simply changing the names of organizations but requires real and transformative change.
- Revised institutional architecture needs careful consideration in view of broader implications within the United Nations system.

Opportunities

- The Rio+20 Conference represents the forum in which a real and transformative change can be decided.
- A stronger, central global environment institution, with a strengthened legal mandate, at the same level as other United Nations agencies, could contribute to achieve increased balance among the three dimensions of sustainable development.
- Strengthening work at the regional and national levels to foster Environmental Sustainability is essential and this needs to be fully exploited within a reformed international environmental governance system.
- A stronger global environmental organization, accompanied by stronger national and regional governance systems, will allow delivering at country level on the capacity-building and technology transfer needs of developing countries.

- It would also allow for putting in place new mechanisms such as for the assessment of emerging technologies, to improve accountability and take into account all perspectives.
- Synergies among MEAs offer an opportunity to realize more efficient use of resources and to more effectively address environmental issues.

High-level political messages from the session

- There is a need to promptly put in place a strengthened environmental governance system, centred around a global institution with a strong mandate and political visibility, able to fulfil the key functions that are needed to address the environmental challenges that our world faces today.
- Forty years after the Stockholm Conference and the establishment of UNEP, the world has changed, and the institutional architecture looking after the global environment urgently needs reform, including a strengthened UNEP.
- A reformed, stronger and more effective international environmental governance system, and a stronger global environment organization, need to rely on a series of underlying “principles” and have certain characteristics:
 - Ability to deal on an equal footing with other organizations to give equitable consideration to all three pillars of sustainable development
 - Inclusiveness
 - Enhanced coherence and coordination across environmental programmes, including MEAs, and integration across sectors
 - Efficient use of resources
 - Able to put in place system-wide coherent planning in the UN system to address environmental concerns
 - Adequate, predictable, and stable financial resources to support the enhanced mandate of a global environmental organization that is fully responsive to the significance of environmental challenges and the needs of developing countries
 - Ability to track financing for the environment to better assess progress and address gaps;
 - Alignment of financing with policymaking
 - Strengthened scientific and science-policy interface.
- Vast support for upgrading UNEP into a specialized agency, with some participants rather supporting broad reforms to the international environmental governance system and existing institution, without specifying the form of those reforms. Vast support for universal membership of a strengthened UNEP.
- Stronger regional and national level environmental governance, including through stronger presence and replication of the above “principles” at these levels.
- Increased space in a reformed international environmental governance system, for participation by major groups and stakeholders, and civil society, including through the strengthening of the application of Rio Principle 10.
- Inclusion of broader, long-term perspectives and accountability mechanisms, such as through the establishment of a global ombudsperson for future generations, that could be replicated at national level.
- Compelling to seize the opportunity provided by the Rio+20 Conference to make concrete decisions on strengthening both international environmental governance and the institutional framework for sustainable development, including as suggested by some, by the transformation of the Commission on Sustainable Development into a Sustainable Development Council.

Summary of ministerial round-table discussion on the institutional framework for sustainable development (Round table E)

Co-Chairs

- H.E. Mr. Thompson Harokaqveh, Minister for Environment and Conservation, Papua New Guinea
- H.E. Ms. Flavia Munaaba Nabugere, Minister of State for Environment, Uganda

Major points raised

- Universal membership as a means to strengthen the legitimacy and efficiency of UNEP.
- How politically realistic is it to go for the specialized agency?
- Need for a system-wide strategy for environmental activities within the United Nations.
- Reform at national and international levels is interrelated and important lessons learned can be taken from both levels.
- Giving UNEP a stronger voice in the United Nations system, in particular to increase access to financial resources.
- Importance of UNEP in creating synergies with MEAs.
- An incremental approach to reforming international environmental governance is important to understand how to find the best mechanism to achieve our goal.

Challenges

- There is a need for an accountability mechanism for strengthening the implementation of MEAs.
- Institutional framework for sustainable development reform should improve coordination within the United Nations system with respect to environmental activities, improve the integration of the three sustainable development pillars within United Nations decision-making, and generate more political engagement.
- Strong mechanisms exist in the economic and social pillar of sustainable development (WTO, UNDP, ILO). On the other hand, there is no strong institution that represents the environmental pillar.
- Institutional framework for sustainable development reform should go through different steps: identifying the extent of environmental degradation, designing interventions, mobilizing resources to address those concerns.
- There is a need to increase public participation and access to justice in environmental matters.
- Create concrete outcomes on the ground.
- Improve the institutional framework for sustainable development at all levels, including national and local levels.
- Current strengths and weaknesses of UNEP need to be analysed to identify gaps. If this is done quickly we can build a case for upgrading UNEP to an agency in Rio.
- There is no doubt that upgrading UNEP is necessary because there is a great need for strengthening capacity-building and implementation of MEAs. This would require a new mandate and status for UNEP.
- Regional representation of UNEP should be strengthened. Some functions should be taken down to the level where we can see tangible outcomes.

Opportunities

- Transforming UNEP into a specialized agency would facilitate access to financial resources.
- Changing the status of UNEP will strengthen the position of environment ministers in global consultations.
- UNEP has a track record that puts it in a unique position to deal with the environmental pillar.

- International environmental governance needs to be looked at in the broader institutional framework for sustainable development system. Strengthening the environmental pillar needs also to strengthen the overall structure.
- Universal membership will allow broader legitimacy within the system.
- Upgrading UNEP will allow it to create strong synergies with MEAs.
- A more independent and autonomous UNEP would be able to better organize global action and monitor the implementation of decisions taken.
- A stronger UNEP would increase parties' compliance to meet sustainable development targets.
- Rio is an opportunity for countries to make public commitments and stimulate political commitment to strengthening the institutional framework for sustainable development.

High-level political messages from the session

- Environment is a cross-cutting concern. There is a need for a strong institution to take care of such a multifaceted problem.
- There is no other institution in the United Nations System that can give the adequate importance to environmental matters and oversee environmental decisions and programmes.
- Implementation of MEAs is critical. UNEP can do what we all dreamed that it should when it was first set up.
- Whichever option we chose the important aspect is to spread political support.
- We should focus on identifying the arrangement that will be easier to implement at the national level.
- Women should be integrated in the decision-making process and gender issues mainstreamed in MEA implementation.

5. Breakfast event: “Resilient People, Resilient Planet: A Future Worth Choosing”. The report of the high-level panel of the United Nations Secretary-General on Global Sustainability

Wednesday, 22 February 2012, 9 a.m. - 10 a.m. Conference room 13

Facilitator:

- Mr. Olav Kjørven, Director of UNDP Bureau for Development Policy and Assistant Secretary-General

Special guests:

- Mr. Janos Pasztor, Executive Secretary, United Nations Secretary-General’s High-level Panel on Global Sustainability
- H.E. Ms. Izabella Teixeira, Minister for the Environment, Brazil and Member of the United Nations Secretary General’s High-level Panel on Sustainability
- H.E. Ms. Caroline Spelman, Secretary of State for the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, United Kingdom

Summary of the breakfast event: “Resilient People, Resilient Planet: A Future Worth Choosing”. The report of the high-level panel of the United Nations Secretary-General on Global Sustainability

Major points of discussion

- The main objective of the report of the Global Panel on Sustainability was to reflect on and formulate a new vision for sustainable growth and prosperity, along with mechanisms for achieving it.
- Progress towards sustainable development needs to be a dynamic process, responsive to adaptation and learning followed by action at all levels of society, including through more sustainable production and consumption patterns and sustainable development mainstreaming into private sector and civil society work.
- Empowering people to make sustainable choices: real choices are only possible if human rights, basic needs, human security and resilience are assured. The problem is not just unsustainable choice, but a lack of sustainable choices in the first place.
- Working towards a sustainable economy requires a decisive shift towards green growth not just in the financial system, but in the real economy.
- A more comprehensive approach to development needs to be considered to achieve sustainability. Reality is more complex than the three pillars comprising environment, economy and social issues.
- Governments need to promote more sustainable public procurement processes.
- The establishment of an outlook report, which highlights periodic assessments of global sustainable development, would be helpful.

Challenges

- The shift towards sustainable development requires more attention for gender equality; yet concrete actions towards the economic empowerment of women have not sufficiently been realized.
- An effective framework of institutions and decision-making processes is needed to achieve sustainable development: What is the best model to achieve this?
- In view of the growing global population in the coming years, there needs to be an innovative and integrated approach to addressing issues of energy, food security and clean water supplies.
- Funding, in particular ODA, is not always directed to all the right sectors. A paradigm shift is required.

Opportunities

- Funding through national development banks has proved to be more effective in contributing to sustainable development, compared to bilateral donors and other international funding mechanisms.
- Equity needs to be at the forefront of the Sustainable Development Agenda: inclusion of women and youth in the economy, society, politics, labour markets and business developments is a must to achieve long-term sustainability.
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) must be aligned with the Millennium Development Goals: this need to be considered when developing the SDGs.
- The Panel’s Global Sustainability report should be presented to Governments in Rio to receive the political mileage it deserves.

High-level political messages from the session

- Sustainable Development is not only the responsibility of governments but a goal that everybody needs to contribute to, in particular the private sector.
- Credible policymaking needs to be based on sound science.
- Transparency in displaying the cost of action and inaction could help trigger the political will necessary to act for a sustainable future and eradication of poverty.

- The vision of sustainable development requires a longer term rather than short-term view.
- People are in the centre of sustainable development. The time has come to move from concept to action at all levels.
- Sustainable Development needs to move from the margin to the mainstream.
- Sustained momentum and political will are key to achieving the objectives set out in the report of the Panel on Global Sustainability.

6. Moderated plenary discussion on Rio+20 and beyond: Responding to the challenges

Wednesday, 22 February 2012, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. Conference room 1

Chair:

- President of the Governing Council of UNEP

Introductory remarks:

- H.E. Mr. Stephen Kalonzo Musyoka, Vice-President, Kenya

Keynote speaker:

- Mr. Sha Zukang, Secretary General of UNCSD, Under-Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs

Panel Moderator:

- Mr. Mark Halle, Director, International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)

Composition of the panel:

- H.E. Ms. Ida Auken, Minister of Environment, Denmark
- H.E. Dr. Hasan Mahmud, Minister of Forest and Environment, Bangladesh
- H.E. Ms. Rhoda Peace Tumusiime, African Union Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture
- H.E. Dr. Kerri Ann Jones, Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, United States of America
- H.E. Ms. Adriana Soto, Vice-Minister of Environment, Colombia

Concluding remarks:

- Mr. Achim Steiner, UNEP Executive Director and Under-Secretary-General

Summary of the moderated plenary discussion on Rio+20 and beyond: Responding to the challenges

Challenges

- There is the need to raise the level of ambition going forward to Rio, and to concretize the actions required to achieve sustainable development.
- To mobilize national political will and international solidarity to secure a strong outcome at Rio and beyond.
- Ministries beyond the Environment Ministry have to join the sustainable development community to drive the sustainability agenda.
- Countries face differing development trajectories and thus require different approaches.
- A sound financial base is imperative from which to respond to environmental and sustainability challenges.
- Capacity development and technology transfer are required to support developing countries to transition to a green economy and governance for sustainable development.
- Preoccupation with short-term crises hinders deeper consideration of long-term and inter-generational impacts.
- To enhancing the participation of all, in particular giving space to a broader stakeholder group including the private sector.
- Currently there are limited means of monitoring objectives, targets and progress achieved.
- Africa, the least developed countries and the small island developing States face specific vulnerabilities, especially pertaining to climate change.
- Governance at all levels has to be strengthened and streamlined for sustainable development.
- Continuing and emerging issues, including the sound management of chemicals and wastes, in particular e-waste, and water management, should be highlighted and addressed in Rio.

Opportunities

- Through information and connection technologies, wide access to data and knowledge is possible. Knowledge platforms, toolkits and models of success are available to support countries for policy-formulation and governance.
- Corporations and the public sector have never been as interested in supporting sustainability and sustainable development, as they are now. The market for green and sustainably focused products and services has grown exponentially.
- Governments are important, but they cannot do it alone; this underlies a deeper understanding of how partnerships are opportunities to bring different and complementary expertise, perspectives and resources together.
- Opportunities for multiple wins exist when looking at issues through a combined social, economic and environmental lens. Examples were mentioned such as a cook stoves initiative that addresses women's health, deforestation, small industry development and climate change.
- Cooperation at the international level, both through North-South and South-South cooperation, is important.
- Cities should be recognized as key actors that can move fast to improve multi-pronged innovative sustainability policies.

High-level political messages from the session

- All three pillars of sustainable development are intertwined like the three dimensional, double helix structure of DNA, and environment is a key integrating link. Sustainable development must integrate the three pillars into one agenda with strong bonds such that it does not break down.
- Environment ministers alone cannot implement the sustainable development agenda. There is a high need to penetrate the culture of the finance, planning and development ministries and

persuade them that a green economy is economic development. This message must also be conveyed to heads of state in economic terms that will convince both them and the public.

- There is urgency to our work and our level of ambition must match the challenges we face; however, the crises must be turned into opportunities, such as job creation through the greening of economies.
- A smooth transition to a green economy will lead to smart development that includes safeguards to protect vulnerable communities and to ensure a socially inclusive growth.
- Our collective measure of wealth must go beyond GDP to include environmental and social dimensions to more accurately capture human well-being.
- SDGs have the potential to harness political will and must be linked to the post 2015 policy landscape.
- A new institutional infrastructure must be based on substance. We must take a fresh look at the role of civil society, and in particular we need to move out of our comfort zone and better engage the private sector in decision-making processes.
- UNEP must be strengthened, including through universal membership and sustainable financing.
- Rio must produce more than words, there must be commitments and networks that will lead to practical action, implementation that will meet the needs of individuals on the ground and not only change at the multilateral level.
- We need to remove our mental “square brackets” in Rio+20 so we can take advantage of the opportunities to move forward on sustainable development of the entire planet for all people in an equitable way.
- It is a fundamentally different world from the one of 1992. New interconnectivity technologies allow us to tap into knowledge and imagination of a wider and broader set of actors. In Rio, governments must commit to robust accountability, including by establishing concrete monitoring mechanisms, such as an early warning system that will alert us to problems in implementation. Decision-making must be more transparent.

Annex IV

Statement by the Secretary-General

I am pleased to greet the UNEP Governing Council and Global Ministerial Environment Forum, and I offer my congratulations on the fortieth anniversary of UNEP.

Your meeting occurs four months before the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. Four decades since the founding of UNEP and 20 years since the Rio Earth Summit, the moment is ripe to advance the agenda of sustainable development from theory and uneven progress to decisive implementation.

The first of the two themes of Rio+20 – a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication – is a logical evolution of the spirit of Stockholm, Rio and Johannesburg. The time has come to scale up what has been incubating for 40 years.

The second – the institutional framework for sustainable development – is a call for you, the ministers responsible for the environment, to consider how to make your voice in international affairs commensurate with the challenges and opportunities of sustainability.

I have made sustainable development a priority of my tenure because it cuts across all issues and directly affects the well-being of every member of the human family. In Rio, we have an opportunity to put the world on a sustainable path. But let us be under no illusion about the scale of the challenge. Finding long-term solutions to our economic, social and environmental problems is no easy task. Connecting the dots between water, food and energy security, climate change, urbanization, poverty, inequality and the empowerment of the world's women will take profound vision, deep courage and resolute will from all sectors of society.

We need an outcome from Rio+20 that will relate to the concerns of all. It must be clear, practical and transformational. It should convince even the sceptics. We must be prepared to take decisions and adopt policies that will promote the long-term development of our societies, based on science and the needs of future generations. I urge ministers responsible for the environment to come to Rio armed with bold, creative solutions to achieve the future we want.

I wish you a successful meeting.
