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

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Items 6 of the provisional agenda*

**Programme of work and budget, and other
administrative and budgetary issues**

**Progress in the implementation of resolution 3/4 on
environment and health**

Report of the Executive Director

Summary

In its resolution 3/4 on environment and health, the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) requested the Executive Director of UNEP, in collaboration with the World Health Organization, relevant United Nations entities and stakeholders, including the private sector, and subject to the availability of resources, to continue ongoing efforts to support countries, upon request, in developing integrated environment and health policies and measures, and to develop methods, tools, and guidelines to promote integrated environmental and health risk assessments, building on existing work in that regard. It also encouraged member States and stakeholders to continue engaging, as appropriate, in the work of ongoing intergovernmental regional processes on health and environment in addressing the health and environment nexus to spearhead the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The present report provides an update on progress made in the implementation of resolution 3/4, as requested in paragraph 41 of the resolution.

* UNEP/EA.4/1/Rev.1.

I. Progress in the implementation of resolution 3/4

1. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), pursuant to the mandate entrusted to it by the United Nations Environment Assembly in its resolution 3/4, has catalysed and implemented a range of actions, the highlights of which are described in the following paragraphs.

A. Methodologies and tools

2. Under the Global Environment Facility project for the development of an integrated health and environment observatory (ChemObs) for the sound management of chemicals in nine African countries (Ethiopia, Gabon, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Senegal, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe), a scientific and technical committee meeting on ChemObs guidance was held in Dakar from 27 to 29 March 2018 with the aim of reaching agreement on the modalities and practical steps to design and define the decision-making tools package for the sound management of chemicals in Africa. Participants in the meeting highlighted the need to establish a data collection and management system providing linkages for the exchange of information and knowledge between government agencies and entities related to chemicals management, and to facilitate the fulfilment of the reporting and statistical requirements of the entities concerned. A fully functioning data collection and management system will be made available to countries for testing and validation by late 2019.

B. Regional processes on health and environment

3. The third Interministerial Conference on Health and Environment in Africa, which was organized jointly by the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNEP and hosted by the Government of Gabon, was held in Libreville from 6 to 9 November 2018, a decade after African leaders signed the Libreville Declaration on Health and Environment in Africa. The main objective of the meeting was to assess the progress achieved over the previous decade and to define the key lessons learned. A total of 550 participants attended the conference, including 38 ministers and deputy ministers of health or environment, and heads of delegations, ministers of finance, experts, representatives of regional economic communities and other subregional blocks and international organizations, as well as representatives of the private sector. Ministers adopted a 10-year strategic action plan for increased coverage of health and environment interventions for primary prevention in public health and preservation of ecosystems integrity. The conference and its outcomes represent the first continental response to the global commitment to a “pollution-free planet” made at the third session of the Environment Assembly. It is expected that views and recommendations on the effective implementation of the 10-year strategic action plan will be expressed at the fourth session of the Environment Assembly.

C. Environment and health impacts of pesticides and fertilizers

4. In paragraph 13 of resolution 3/4, the Environment Assembly invited member States to increase awareness of the risks posed to human, animal and environmental health from the improper use of fertilizers and pesticides and to promote measures to address them. In paragraph 16 of the same resolution, the Environment Assembly requested the Executive Director of UNEP, in collaboration with WHO, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and other relevant organizations, to present a report by the fifth session of the Environment Assembly on the environmental and health impacts of pesticides and fertilizers and ways of minimizing them, given the lack of data in that regard. A first consultative meeting towards the development of the report was organized by UNEP, back-to-back with the FAO/WHO Joint Meeting on Pesticides Management in October 2018. Selected country representatives from different regions, the FAO and WHO panels of experts on pesticide management, relevant experts on fertilizers, including intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, participated in the meeting. The main outputs of the consultative meeting included decisions about the contents of the report, key information resources and the main contributors to the report, as well as the process for developing the report.

D. Climate

5. The Ministerial Declaration on “Health, Environment and Climate Change”, adopted at the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, ministers and high-level representatives expressed appreciation for the efforts of WHO, UNEP, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the secretariat of the Framework Convention on Climate Change, together with the Government of Morocco, in launching a global initiative on health, environment and climate change to promote better management of environmental and climate risks to health, and low carbon, climate resilient, sustainable and inclusive development

aimed at ensuring good health and well-being. They also called on WHO, UNEP, WMO and the secretariat of the Convention to work with countries and other entities, relevant stakeholders and interested parties, to identify and recommend the most effective mechanisms to accomplish that aim. Accordingly, a global coalition on health, environment and climate change was launched by WHO, UNEP and WMO at the seventy-first World Health Assembly held in May 2018. The coalition has begun working on a joint plan on air quality with the Climate and Clean Air Coalition to Reduce Short-lived Climate Pollutants (CCAC). An initial coordination meeting of the coalition was held on 29 October 2018 back to back with the first Global Conference on Air Pollution and Health. At the meeting, the regional agendas, priorities and activities of key actors on health, environment and climate change were presented and potential areas of collaboration were discussed.

E. Biodiversity

6. In paragraph 28 of resolution 3/4, the Environment Assembly encouraged member States and the Executive Director of UNEP, in cooperation with all relevant stakeholders, to raise awareness of the negative impacts on wildlife of chemical pollutants, including the risks associated with agro-chemicals and animal drugs as well as the dangers to the environment of lead in ammunition. In paragraph 16 of the same resolution, the Environment Assembly requested the elaboration of a report on the environmental and health impacts of pesticides and fertilizers and ways of minimizing them.

F. Antimicrobial resistance

7. In paragraph 34 of resolution 3/4, the Executive Director of UNEP was requested to prepare by the fifth session of the Environment Assembly, in collaboration with WHO, FAO, the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals, the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management and the Interagency Coordination Group on Antimicrobial Resistance, a report on the environmental impacts of antimicrobial resistance and the causes for the development and spread of resistance in the environment, including the gaps in understanding of those impacts and causes. An initial scoping paper has been commissioned to obtain data and determine whether the spread of antimicrobials into the environment significantly increases the risk of antimicrobial resistance. The scoping paper will assist in the preparation of the final report, which will be presented to the Environment Assembly at its fifth session. In cooperation with the relevant organizations, a meeting of core experts is envisioned to take place in April 2019 to further determine the scope and content of the report. In collaboration with relevant United Nations entities and other main stakeholders concerned with antimicrobial resistance, a core group of experts will be established to guide the development of the report.

8. In addition, UNEP joined the Interagency Coordination Group on Antimicrobial Resistance, established by the United Nations General Assembly in 2016 with the mandate of providing practical guidance for approaches needed to ensure sustained, effective, global action to address antimicrobial resistance. UNEP has been an active participant in the group since May 2018 and contributed information on the environmental aspects of antimicrobial resistance, which will be included as part of a guidance report to be submitted to the Secretary-General of the United Nations in 2019.

9. In a memorandum of understanding signed in May 2018, FAO, WHO and OIE agreed to strengthen their long-standing partnership with a strong focus on tackling antimicrobial resistance and to step up joint action to combat health threats associated with interactions between humans, animals and the environment. UNEP is collaborating with FAO, WHO and OIE to develop global systems for surveillance of antimicrobial resistance and antimicrobials use, a global antimicrobial stewardship programme, and a monitoring and evaluation framework for the global action plan. A joint work plan on antimicrobial resistance for 2019 and 2020 has been developed.

G. Sustainable consumption and production

10. UNEP, in collaboration with WHO and CCAC, launched the BreatheLife Challenge in May 2018, which called upon citizens across the globe and private sector partners to reduce their contribution to air pollution by committing to walk, bike or take public transport for at least 26 miles during the month of May 2018. Citizens were able to use toolkits available on the BreatheLife website, to take the challenge and share it on various social medial platforms or engage with UNEP and WHO for more information.

H. Resources for implementation and resource mobilization

11. Resources for the implementation of resolution 3/4 have included the appointment of an Environment and Health Coordinator responsible for the overall coordination of activities relating to the resolution.

12. Allocations of \$2,334,284 from the Environment Fund and \$170,409 from the regular budget have been made for the funding of posts to support the implementation of the resolution. Approximately \$630,000 received from France, Norway and Sweden was also mobilized to support activities in response to the resolution.

II. Recommendations and suggested action

13. In order to accelerate action towards achieving a pollution-free planet, reducing global pollution and the related risks to human health and the environment, the capacity of countries and stakeholders needs to be further enhanced through the provision of knowledge, capacity and tools on the environment-health nexus.

14. The exchange of experiences and best practices among the regions is key to strengthening environmental governance around the environment-health nexus, which will enable regional and national policy actions through health and environmental processes to be enhanced.

15. Actions on the environment and health agenda need to be scaled up through the promotion of measures that address pollution in a coordinated, synergistic and impactful way. To that end, the framework of an implementation plan for moving towards a pollution-free planet, as requested by the Environment Assembly in its ministerial declaration entitled “Towards a Pollution-Free Planet” (UNEP/EA.3/HLS.1), adopted at the third session of the Assembly, will be presented for consideration by the Assembly at its fourth session.
