

19/1. Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme

The Governing Council,

1. Adopts the Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme to the special session of the United Nations General Assembly for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21, as annexed to the present decision;
2. Requests the Executive Director to transmit this Declaration to the Secretary-General of the United Nations to be considered in the ongoing reform process of the United Nations system;
3. Also requests the President of the Governing Council to present this Declaration to the high-level segment of the fifth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and to the General Assembly at its special session for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21;
4. Further requests the Executive Director to report on the outcome of the reform process as it relates to the United Nations Environment Programme, as well as on the special session of the General Assembly for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21, to the next session of the Governing Council.

7th meeting
7 February 1997

Annex

NAIROBI DECLARATION ON THE ROLE AND MANDATE OF THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

We, the ministers and heads of delegation attending the nineteenth session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme, held in Nairobi from 27 January to 7 February 1997,

Recalling the goal of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, which is to establish a new and equitable global partnership through the creation of new levels of cooperation among States, key sectors of society and people,

Reiterating our commitment to the implementation of the Rio Declaration, Agenda 21, and the Non-legally Binding Authoritative Statement of Principles for a Global Consensus on the Management, Conservation and Sustainable Development of All Types of Forests, / adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, as well as other environmental conventions agreed upon in the Rio process,

Recognizing the progress made in the implementation of the Rio agreements,

Deeply concerned, nevertheless, at the continuing deterioration of the global environment, including the worsening trends in environmental pollution and the degradation of natural resources, as reflected in the Global Environment Outlook report of the United Nations Environment Programme,

Aware of the rapid changes currently taking place in the world and the increasing complexity and fragmentation of the institutional responses to them, as well as the far-reaching significance of the concept of sustainable development which encompasses economic, social and environmental dimensions, supported by capacity-building, transfer of technology and financial resources to developing countries, in particular least developed countries,

Convinced that a strong, effective and revitalized United Nations Environment Programme is essential to assist the international community in its efforts to reverse environmentally unsustainable trends,

Aware that the special session of the General Assembly for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21 offers a unique opportunity to review and appraise the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and to confirm the revitalized role of the United Nations Environment Programme,

Determined to assist the General Assembly in this important task, and guided by the principles agreed in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development,

Declare:

1. That the United Nations Environment Programme has been and should continue to be the principal United Nations body in the field of the environment and that we, the ministers of the environment and heads of delegation attending the nineteenth session of the Governing Council, are determined to play a stronger role in the implementation of the goals and objectives of the United Nations Environment Programme;

2. That the role of the United Nations Environment Programme is to be the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda that promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system and that serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment;

3. That to this end, we reaffirm the continuing relevance of the mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme deriving from General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972 and further elaborated by Agenda 21. The core elements of the focused mandate of the revitalized United Nations Environment Programme should be the following:

(a) To analyse the state of the global environment and assess global and regional environmental trends, provide policy advice, early warning information on environmental threats, and to catalyse and promote international cooperation and action, based on the best scientific and technical capabilities available;

(b) To further the development of its international environmental law aiming at sustainable development, including the development of coherent interlinkages among existing international environmental conventions;

(c) To advance the implementation of agreed international norms and policies, to monitor and foster compliance with environmental principles and international agreements and stimulate cooperative action to respond to emerging environmental challenges;

(d) To strengthen its role in the coordination of environmental activities in the United Nations system in the field of the environment, as well as its role as an

Implementing Agency of the Global Environment Facility, based on its comparative advantage and scientific and technical expertise;

(e) To promote greater awareness and facilitate effective cooperation among all sectors of society and actors involved in the implementation of the international environmental agenda, and to serve as an effective link between the scientific community and policy makers at the national and international levels;

(f) To provide policy and advisory services in key areas of institution-building to Governments and other relevant institutions;

4. That, for the effective discharge of its focused mandate and to ensure the implementation of the global environmental agenda, we have decided to improve the governance structure of United Nations Environment Programme. In doing so, we have been guided by the following considerations:

(a) The United Nations Environment Programme should serve as the world forum for the ministers and the highest-level government officials in charge of environmental matters in the policy and decision-making processes of the United Nations Environment Programme;

(b) Regionalization and decentralization should be strengthened through the increased involvement and participation of regional ministerial and other relevant forums in the United Nations Environment Programme process, complementary to the central coordinating role of the Programme's headquarters in Nairobi;

(c) The participation of major groups should be increased;

(d) A cost-effective and politically influential inter-sessional mechanism should be designed;

5. That, in order to operationalize its mandate, the revitalized United Nations Environment Programme needs adequate, stable and predictable financial resources and, in this regard, we recognize the interrelationship between excellence, relevance and cost-effectiveness in programme delivery, confidence in the organization and a consequent increase in the competitive ability of the Programme to attract funding;

6. That ways must be sought to assure financial stability for the implementation of the global environmental agenda. In this regard, the predictability and early notification of expected contributions to the Environment Fund would facilitate an effective planning and programming process;

7. That we reaffirm the central importance of the Environment Fund as the principal source of financing for the implementation of the programme of the United Nations Environment Programme;

8. That we are convinced that the expeditious implementation of our decisions and the principles contained in this Declaration, adopted in the year of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations Environment Programme, will revitalize and strengthen the organization and place it at the forefront of international efforts to protect the global environment for present and future generations and in the pursuit of sustainable development;

9. That we request the President of the Governing Council to present this Declaration to the high-level segment of the fifth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and to the special session of the General Assembly for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21.