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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

**Draft report of the Committee of the Whole**

**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 [ ] 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 of its meetings.

**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 circulated to Committee members at its 1st meeting in a conference room paper. 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 annotated agenda for the current session (UNEP/GCSS.XII/1/Add.1/Rev.1).

6. 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 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 good will.

### **III. Emerging policy issues: environment and development (agenda item 4)**

#### **A. International environmental governance**

7. The Committee took up the issue 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.

8. 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.

9. Many representatives voiced support for the upgrade of UNEP to a specialized agency of the United Nations system. 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.

10. 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.

11. *[To be completed]*

#### **B. Chemicals and wastes**

12. 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).

13. 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.

14. 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. 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.

15. 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 in April 2012 on possible financing mechanisms for mercury, set up as part of the intersessional work of the intergovernmental negotiating

committee to prepare a global legally binding instrument on mercury. 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.

16. 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.

17. 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.

18. With a view to facilitating the Committee's consideration of the matter, the Chair requested representatives to provide comments in writing.

19. *[To be completed]*

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