



**Governing Council  
of the United Nations  
Environment  
Programme**



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DECISIONS ADOPTED BY  
GLOBAL MINISTERIAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM  
SIX SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

**We, Ministers of Environment and heads of delegation meeting in Malmö, Sweden from 29 to 31 May 2000, on the occasion of the First Global Ministerial Environment Forum held in pursuance of United Nations General Assembly resolution 53/242 of 28 July 1999 to enable the world's environment ministers to gather to review important and emerging environmental issues and to chart the course for the future,**

*Recalling* the Stockholm Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment and the Rio Declaration of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the Barbados Declaration on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States as well as the Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme,

*Deeply concerned* that, despite the many successful and continuing efforts of the international community since the Stockholm Conference, and some progress having been achieved, the environment and the natural resource base that supports life on Earth continue to deteriorate at an alarming rate,

*Reaffirming* the importance of the speedy implementation of the political and legal commitments entered into by the international community, in particular at the Rio Conference, Convinced that urgent and renewed efforts are required to be undertaken by all countries in a spirit of international solidarity, and recognizing, *inter alia*, the principle of common but differentiated responsibility as contained in the Rio Principles to manage the environment so as to promote sustainable development for the benefit of present and future generations,

*Conscious* that the root causes of global environmental degradation are

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embedded in social and economic problems such as pervasive poverty, unsustainable production and consumption patterns, inequity in distribution of wealth, and the debt burden,

*Also* conscious that success in combating environmental degradation is dependent on the full participation of all actors in society, an aware and educated population, respect for ethical and spiritual values and cultural diversity, and protection of indigenous knowledge,

*Aware* that the 10-year review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21 to be conducted in 2002 will provide a further opportunity for the international community to take action to implement its commitments and to strengthen international cooperation urgently required to address the challenges of sustainable development in the twenty-first century,

*Convinced* that the Millennium Summit of the fifty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly provides a unique opportunity to address at the highest level the role of the United Nations in the field of sustainable development, and noting in this regard the proposals of the Secretary-General of the United Nations as contained in his report "We the peoples: the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century", which will serve as the basis of discussion at the Summit,

*Determined* to contribute to this historic endeavour from an environmental perspective, and having requested the President of the Governing Council to bring the following matters to the attention of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, the Millennium Assembly,

**Declare that:**

**~~Major environmental challenges of the twenty-first century~~**

1. The year 2000 marks a defining moment in the efforts of the international community to ensure that the growing trends of environmental degradation that threaten the sustainability of the planet are arrested and reversed. Hence there is an urgent need for reinvigorated international cooperation based on common concerns and a spirit of international partnership and solidarity.
2. There is an alarming discrepancy between commitments and action. Goals and targets agreed by the international community in relation to sustainable development, such as the adoption of national sustainable development strategies and increased support to developing countries, must be implemented in a timely fashion. The mobilization of domestic and international resources, including development assistance, far beyond current levels is vital to the success of this endeavor.
3. The evolving framework of international environmental law and the development of national law provide a sound basis for addressing the major environmental threats of the day. It must be underpinned by a more coherent and coordinated approach among international environmental instruments. We must also recognize the central importance of environmental compliance, enforcement and liability, and promote the observation of the precautionary approach as contained in the Rio Principles, and other important policy tools, as well as capacity-building.

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4. The Global Environment Outlook 2000 of the United Nations Environment Programme provides a compelling assessment of the serious nature of the environmental threats faced by the international community. Special attention should be paid to unsustainable consumption patterns among the richer segments in all countries, particularly developed countries. Environmental stewardship is lagging behind economic and social development, and a rapidly growing population is placing increased pressures on the environment.
5. Environmental threats resulting from the accelerating trends of urbanization and the development of megacities, the tremendous risk of climate change, the freshwater crisis and its consequences for food security and the environment, the unsustainable exploitation and depletion of biological resources, drought and desertification, and uncontrolled deforestation, increasing environmental emergencies, the risk to human health and the environment from hazardous chemicals, and land-based sources of pollution, are all issues that need to be addressed.
6. Opportunities however exist that can redress this situation. Technological innovation and the emergence of new resource-efficient technologies, in which the private sector plays a major role, provide a source of great hope and increased opportunities to avoid the environmentally destructive practices of the past including through clean technologies.
7. To confront the underlying causes of environmental degradation and poverty, we must integrate environmental considerations in the mainstream of decision-making. We must also intensify our efforts in developing preventive action and a concerted response, including national environmental governance and the international rule of law, awareness-raising and education, and harness the power of information technology to this end. All actors involved must work together in the interest of a sustainable future.
8. It is necessary that the environmental perspective is taken into account in both the design and the assessment of macro-economic policy-making, as well as practices of government and multilateral lending and credit institutions such as export credit agencies.
9. The trends of globalization in the world economy, with the attendant environmental risks and opportunities, require international institutions to adopt new approaches and to engage the major actors involved in globalization in new ways. We should encourage a balanced and integrated approach to trade and environment policies in pursuit of sustainable development, in accordance with the decision of the Commission on Sustainable Development at its eighth session.
10. The role and responsibility of nations based on the Rio Principles, as well as the role and responsibility of the main actors including Governments, the private sector and civil society, must be emphasized in addressing the environmental challenges of the twenty-first century. Governments are the primary agents in this process, whose actions are vital in implementing United Nations environment-related instruments since Stockholm, institutional capacity-building and strengthened international cooperation.

**The private sector and the environment**

11. The private sector has emerged as a global actor that has a significant impact on environmental trends through its investment and technology decisions. In this regard, Governments have a crucial role in creating an enabling environment. The institutional and regulatory capacities of Governments to interact with the private sector should be enhanced. A greater commitment by the private sector should be pursued to engender a new culture of environmental accountability through the application of the polluter-pays principle, environmental performance indicators and reporting, and the establishment of a precautionary approach in investment and technology decisions. This approach must be linked to the development of cleaner and more resource efficient technologies for a life-cycle economy and efforts to facilitate the transfer of environmentally sound technologies.
12. The potential of the new economy to contribute to sustainable development should be further pursued, particularly in the areas of information technology, biology and biotechnology. The ethical and social implications must be carefully considered. There must be recognition of the public interest in knowledge related to biodiversity, including the interest of indigenous and local communities. A corporate ethic guided by public interest should be promoted.
13. The Global Compact established by the Secretary-General of the United Nations with the private sector provides an excellent vehicle for the development of a constructive engagement with the private sector. UNEP should continue to enhance its engagement and collaboration with the private sector and consider the relation between foreign direct investment and the environment, with a view to minimizing negative environmental implications.

**Civil society and the environment**

14. Civil society plays a critically important role in addressing environmental issues. The role, capabilities and involvement of civil society organizations has seen a substantial increase over recent years, which highlights the need for national Governments and for UNEP and international organizations to enhance the engagement of these organizations in their work on environmental matters.
15. Civil society has found new and effective modes of expression of popular sentiments and concerns. It provides a powerful agent for promoting shared environmental purpose and values. Civil society plays an important role in bringing emerging environmental issues to the attention of policy makers, raising public awareness, promoting innovative ideas and approaches, and promoting transparency as well as non-corrupt activities in environmental decision-making.
16. The role of civil society at all levels should be strengthened through freedom of access to environmental information to all, broad participation in environmental decision-making, as well as access to justice on environmental issues. Governments should promote conditions to facilitate the ability of all parts of society to have a voice and to play an active role in creating a

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sustainable future.

17. Science provides the basis for environmental decision-making. There is a need for intensified research, fuller engagement of the scientific community and increased scientific cooperation on emerging environmental issues, as well as improved avenues for communication between the scientific community, decision makers and other stakeholders.
18. We must pay special attention to threats to cultural diversity and traditional knowledge, in particular of indigenous and local communities, which may be posed by globalization. In this context we welcome the proclamation by the United Nations General Assembly of the year 2001 as the International Year of Dialogue among Civilizations.
19. Greater emphasis must be given to the gender perspective in decision-making concerning the management of the environment and natural resources.
20. There is a need for independent and objective media at all levels in enhancing awareness and developing shared environmental values in global society. The media can serve the cause of sustainable development by identifying emerging issues, awareness-raising and promoting appropriate action.

**The 2002 review of UNCED**

21. The 2002 review of the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) should be undertaken by an international conference at the summit level. The objective should not be to renegotiate Agenda 21, which remains valid, but to inject a new spirit of cooperation and urgency based on agreed actions in the common quest for sustainable development. In this regard, the ratification of all environmental conventions and protocols, in particular those related to climate, desertification, biosafety and chemicals, should be urgently pursued by Governments.
22. Governments and UNEP have to play a major role in the preparation for the 2002 review of UNCED at the regional and global levels and ensure that the environmental dimension of sustainable development is fully considered on the basis of a broad assessment of the state of the global environment. The preparations for the conference should be accelerated.
23. The 2002 conference should aim at addressing the major challenges to sustainable development, and in particular the pervasive effects of the burden of poverty on a large proportion of the Earth's inhabitants, counterposed against excessive and wasteful consumption and inefficient resource use that perpetuate the vicious circle of environmental degradation and increasing poverty.
24. The 2002 conference should review the requirements for a greatly strengthened institutional structure for international environmental governance based on an assessment of future needs for an institutional architecture that has the capacity to effectively address wide-ranging environmental threats in a globalizing world. UNEP's role in this regard should be strengthened and its financial base broadened and made more predictable.

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**Conclusion**

25. At the dawn of this new century, we have at our disposal the human and material resources to achieve sustainable development, not as an abstract concept but as a concrete reality. The unprecedented developments in production and information technologies, the emergence of a younger generation with a clear sense of optimism, solidarity and values, women increasingly aware and with an enhanced and active role in society - all point to the emergence of a new consciousness. We can decrease poverty by half by 2015 without degrading the environment, we can ensure environmental security through early warning, we can better integrate economic policy, we can better coordinate legal instruments and we can realize a vision of a world without slums. We commit ourselves to realizing this common vision.

*Fifth plenary meeting  
31 May 2000*

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**Activities of the United Nations Environment Programme**

*The Governing Council,*

1. *Takes note* with appreciation of the report on the activities of UNEP presented by the Executive Director (UNEP/GCSS.VI/6 and Add. 1/Rev.1) and the valuable comments made thereon;
2. *Commends* the Executive Director for presenting the report in a consolidated manner focusing on the five agreed priorities;
3. *Requests* the Executive Director to take into account comments made in the further elaboration of the water policy and strategy and further requests him to take the necessary measures accordingly for its implementation and report on the progress made to the Governing Council at its next session;
4. *Welcomes* the information provided in the Executive Director's report on budgetary and financial matters, and requests that future activity reports to the Governing Council and to the Committee of Permanent Representatives should present a clear correlation between relevant decisions of the Governing Council and other legislative bodies, activities and resources set aside, actual budget expenditure, and qualitative evaluation of results achieved.

*Fifth plenary meeting  
31 May 2000*

**Contribution of the United Nations Environment Programme  
to the implementation of Agenda 21**

and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21

*The Governing Council,*

1. *Requests* the Committee of Permanent Representatives to review, on its behalf, the activities of the United Nations Environment Programme contributing to the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21;
2. *Calls upon* the Executive Director, to that end, to prepare a report for consideration by the, Committee of Permanent Representatives to be distributed to all Governments for their information and comments, and to ensure the active contribution of the United Nations Environment Programme to the preparatory process for the 10-year review of the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development;
3. *Further requests* the Executive Director to submit a final version of the above-mentioned report through the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session;
4. *Requests* the Executive Director to submit a report on this matter to the Governing Council at its twenty-first session.

*Fifth plenary meeting  
31 May 2000*

Provisional agenda of the Global Ministerial Environment Forum/twenty-first session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme

*The Governing Council,*

1. *Decides* to include an item entitled "Outcome of the first Global Ministerial Environment Forum", on the provisional agenda of the twenty-first session of the Governing Council;
2. *Requests* the Bureau of the Governing Council, in consultation with the Committee of Permanent Representatives and with the support of the Executive Director, to decide on the organizational aspects for the ministerial-level consultations at the second Global Ministerial Environmental Forum/twenty-first session of the Governing Council, and to decide on the themes for these consultations.

*Fifth plenary meeting  
31 May 2000*