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GLOBAL MINISTERIAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM

REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISIONS OF THE TWENTY-FIRST  
SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL/GLOBAL MINISTERIAL FORUM

ISSUES ARISING FROM THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
AT ITS FIFTY-SIXTH SESSION, SPECIFICALLY CALLING FOR ACTION  
BY THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

Note by the secretariat

1. The present note is issued in pursuance of a standing reporting requirement of the Governing Council as a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, and provides in annex information on issues arising from the resolutions of the General Assembly adopted at its fifty-sixth regular session, which specifically call for action by, or are of direct relevance to, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
2. In keeping with the trend noted since the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly, there was a large number of resolutions dealing with environmental issues, and that specifically referred to, acknowledged, or had a direct bearing on, the work of UNEP. This trend reflects the increasing importance accorded to environmental issues in the work of the General Assembly.

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Annex

ISSUES ARISING FROM THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS FIFTY-SIXTH SESSION

**Resolutions of major significance to UNEP**

1. By its resolution 56/193, adopted on 21 December 2001, the General Assembly took note of the **'Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its twenty-first session'**, and took note with appreciation of the progress being made by **UNEP** in preparation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development. It further welcomed the efforts already made to realize the objectives of the Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of UNEP, supported the early and full implementation of Assembly resolution 53/242 of 28 July 1999, and requested that the reports on the work of the Environmental Management Group (EMG) be made available to the Member States and members of specialized agencies.
2. The Assembly noted with interest the ongoing work of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Group of Ministers or their Representatives on International Environmental Governance (initiated by Governing Council decision 21/21 of 9 February 2001) with respect to the comprehensive policy-oriented assessment of existing institutional weaknesses, as well as future needs and options of strengthened international environmental governance. In this regard, the Assembly reiterated the invitation to submit a progress report to the Preparatory Committee of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, at its second session (28 January to 8 February 2002), and the final results to the third session (25 March to 5 April 2002), so that it can be fully considered in the preparatory process.
3. The Assembly underlined the need for sufficient financial resources on a stable and predictable basis to ensure the full implementation of the mandate of **UNEP** and, within this context, noted ongoing related deliberations, and the proposal of the Secretary-General to increase United Nations (UN) funding for the cost of servicing the UNEP secretariat and the Governing Council from the regular budget. It further requested the Secretary-General to keep the resource needs of **UNEP** and the United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON) under continuous review and make proposals as needed in the context of the UN regular budget, with a view to strengthening **UNEP** and UNON.
4. On 24 December 2001, the General Assembly approved a **'Programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003'** of \$2.63 billion (resolutions 56/253 and 254), an increase of some \$82 million. For **UNEP**, the amount approved was \$7,660,200, slightly lower than the Secretary-General's proposal of \$7,840,600, but representing an increase of approximately 10% over the 2000-2001 appropriation. In the same resolution, the General Assembly noted that the activities undertaken by **UNEP** continue to heavily depend on extrabudgetary resources for their implementation and requested the Secretary-General to make every effort to ensure stability and predictability in funding **UNEP's** activities.
5. By its resolution 56/226 on the **'World Summit on Sustainable Development'**, adopted on 24 December 2001, the General Assembly welcomed national preparations, including at the local level, as well as the activities of major groups, related to the preparations for the Summit. It further welcomed the valuable contributions from the preparatory activities undertaken at the subregional and regional levels, as well as from other relevant initiatives undertaken at the international level. The Assembly encouraged new initiatives and the strengthening of commitments at all levels, including through reinvigorating, at the highest political level, global commitment and partnerships, especially between Governments of the North and the South, on the one hand, and between Governments and major groups on the other. It also expressed its appreciation of the work undertaken by South Africa and Indonesia as the host Governments for the Summit and the final Preparatory Committee session, respectively.
6. In the operative paragraphs of the resolution, the Assembly approved the Summit's provisional rules of procedure, as recommended by the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), and decided that the

Summit should be held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 26 August to 4 September 2002, with the participation of Heads of State and Government during the period 2 to 4 September.

7. The Assembly reiterated that the Summit, including its preparatory process, should ensure a balance between economic development, social development and environmental protection since they are interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development. The Assembly requested CSD to decide on all remaining issues related to the organization of work of the Summit, and asked the Secretary-General to launch a public information campaign to raise global awareness of the Summit. It further invited donors to continue providing extrabudgetary resources in support of the preparatory activities and the Summit itself.

8. The Assembly reiterated the invitation to all intergovernmental processes relevant to the Summit to submit their progress reports/results to the preparatory committee at its second session (28 January-8 February 2002) and their final results to the third session of the Preparatory Committee (25 March-5 April 2002), so that they can be fully considered in the preparatory process. The Assembly also reiterated the role of CSD acting as the Preparatory Committee for the global intergovernmental process for the preparation of the Summit, and recalled the mandate and role of its Bureau. It welcomed initiatives undertaken by the Secretary-General to raise international awareness on the Summit, and requested him to transmit the Summit's outcome to the Assembly at its fifty-seventh session.

#### **Further resolutions of significance to UNEP's work programme**

9. Three separate resolutions were adopted on 21 December 2001 dealing respectively with the **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) (56/197)**, the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (56/199)**, and the **United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa (UNCCD) (56/196)**. In each of the resolutions, the Assembly encouraged the conferences of the parties (COPs) to and the secretariats of the three multilateral environmental agreements, and other international instruments related to environment and sustainable development, as well as relevant organizations, especially **UNEP**, to continue their work for enhancing mutual complementarities with full respect for the status of the secretariats of the conventions and the autonomous decision-making prerogatives of the COPs to the conventions concerned, to strengthen cooperation with a view to facilitating progress in the implementation of those conventions at the international, regional and national levels and to report thereon to their respective COPs. The Assembly also invited the COPs, when setting the dates of their meetings, to take into consideration the schedule of meetings of the Assembly and the CSD so as to ensure the adequate representation of developing countries at those meetings.

10. Resolution 56/197, dealing with the **'Convention on Biological Diversity'**, recognized the importance of the signature of the Cartagena Protocol by 103 parties to the Convention by 5 June 2001, and the ratification thereof or accession thereto by seven parties to date. The Assembly also noted the outcome of the first meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing, which addresses the appropriate access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of its utilization, held from 22 to 26 October 2001 in Germany, and the outcome of the second meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, held at Nairobi from 1 to 5 October 2001.

11. The Assembly welcomed the decision of the COP regarding its programme of work on forest biological diversity, and encouraged the parties to and the secretariat of the CBD to cooperate with the UN Forum on Forests. It also took note of the fact that the provisions of the Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights and the Convention are interrelated. The Assembly noted that it looks forward to the contribution of the CBD to the preparations of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The Assembly also called on parties to the Convention to settle urgently any arrears and to pay their contributions in full and in a timely manner so as to finance the ongoing work of the COP, the subsidiary bodies and the Convention secretariat. The Assembly also called on parties to the Convention to become parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety as soon as possible.

12. In resolution 56/199 entitled, **‘Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind’**, the Assembly expressed its appreciation to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) for its excellent work in preparing the Third Assessment Report, and encouraged UNFCCC parties to make full use of the information contained therein. The Assembly recalled the Millennium Declaration, in which Heads of State and Government resolved to make every effort to ensure the entry into force of the treaty’s Kyoto Protocol, preferably by the tenth anniversary of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 2002, and to embark on the required reduction of emissions of greenhouse gases; and called on all States parties to continue to take effective steps to implement their Convention commitments, in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. The Assembly stressed the importance of capacity-building, as well as of developing and disseminating innovative technologies in respect of key sectors of development, particularly energy, and of investment in this regard, including through private sector involvement, market-oriented approaches and supportive public policies, as well as international cooperation, emphasizing that climate change and its adverse impacts have to be addressed through cooperation at all levels.

13. The Assembly took note of the Marrakesh Accords, adopted by the seventh UNFCCC COP, held at Marrakesh, Morocco, from 29 October to 9 November 2001, complementing the Bonn Agreements on the implementation of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, and paving the way for the timely entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol. The Assembly also took note with appreciation of the Marrakesh Ministerial Declaration, as a contribution to the preparatory process for the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The Assembly also approved the continuation of the institutional linkage of the secretariat of the Convention to the UN, and related administrative arrangements, for a further five-year period, and requested the Secretary-General to review the functioning of that linkage by 31 December 2006, in consultation with the Convention COP.

14. In Assembly resolution 56/196 on the **‘Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa’**, the Assembly welcomed the outcomes of the fourth and fifth sessions of the treaty’s COP. The Assembly welcomed the decision of the COP to submit to the preparatory process of the World Summit on Sustainable Development: the Chairman’s summary of the ministerial and high-level interactive dialogue sessions held at the fifth COP session, which includes the challenges of and opportunities in combating desertification, controlling land degradation and mitigating the effects of drought in affected developing countries, including those relating to financial resources and achieving sustainable development; and the comprehensive report of the *ad hoc* working group for the in-depth review and analysis of reports submitted at the third and fourth sessions of the COPs.

15. The Assembly also welcomed the decision of the Council of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to consider proposed amendments to the GEF Instrument to designate land degradation, primarily desertification and deforestation, as a focal area of the Facility, as a means of enhancing its support for the successful implementation of the Convention with a view to the Council recommending approval of such amendments by the GEF Assembly at its meeting in October 2002. The Assembly also called upon the international community to contribute to the implementation of national, subregional and regional action programmes. It approved the continuation of the current institutional linkage and related administrative arrangements between the UN Secretariat and the Convention secretariat for a further five-year period, to be reviewed by the Assembly and the COP by 31 December 2006. The Assembly invited all parties to pay promptly and in full the contributions required for the core budget of the Convention for the biennium 2002-2003, and urged all parties that have not yet paid their contributions for the year 1999 and/or the biennium 2000-2001 to do so as soon as possible to ensure continuity in the cash flow required to finance the ongoing work of the COP, the secretariat and the Global Mechanism.

16. By its resolution 56/12 of 28 November 2001 entitled, **‘Oceans and Law of the Sea’** the General Assembly emphasized the need to develop, where appropriate, a strong regional focus in marine scientific research and technology, through existing regional organizations, arrangements and programmes, so as to ensure the most effective use of the available resources as well as the protection and preservation of the marine environment, particularly by avoiding duplication and by achieving a holistic approach to the

scientific study of the oceans and their resources. The Assembly expressed its deep concern once again at the degradation of the marine environment, particularly from land-based activities, and emphasized the need for international cooperation and for a coordinated approach at the national and regional levels to this problem, bringing together the many different economic sectors involved. In this context, the Assembly reaffirmed the importance of ensuring the full implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA). It also reiterated its concern at the adverse impacts on the marine environment from ships, in particular through the illegal release of oil and other harmful substances, and by the dumping of hazardous waste, including radioactive materials, nuclear waste and dangerous chemicals, as well as the physical impacts on coral. In this context, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General, in cooperation with the competent international organizations and programmes, including UNEP, as well as representatives of regional development banks and the donor community, to review the efforts being made to build capacity as well as to identify the duplications that need to be avoided and the gaps that may need to be filled for ensuring consistent approaches, both nationally and regionally, with a view to implementing the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, and to include a section on this subject in his annual report on oceans and the law of the sea. The Assembly also urged relevant bodies of the UN system to develop, with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) acting as a focal point, appropriate interactions in the field of marine science with regional fisheries organizations, environmental and scientific bodies or regional centres.

17. The Assembly emphasized once again the importance of the implementation of Part XII of the Law of the Sea Convention to protect and preserve the marine environment and its living marine resources against pollution and physical degradation, and called upon States to continue to prioritize action on marine pollution from land-based sources as part of their national sustainable development strategies and programmes, in an integrated and inclusive manner, as a means of implementing the GPA, and take note of the review by the intergovernmental meeting in Montreal, Canada, from 26 to 30 November 2001. The Assembly further called upon UN agencies and programmes identified in resolution 51/189 of 16 December 1996 to continue to fulfil their roles in support of the GPA, as well as to consult with Governments, representatives of the private sector, financial institutions and bilateral and multilateral donor agencies to review their involvement in the implementation of the GPA and to consider, *inter alia*, what international support is needed to help overcome the obstacles to the preparation and implementation of national and local action programmes.

18. The Assembly also called upon States to take measures for the protection and preservation of coral reefs and to support international efforts in this regard, in particular the measures outlined in the 1998 Renewed Call to Action of the International Coral Reef Initiative and in decision V/3 adopted by the COP to the CBD at its Fifth Meeting, held at Nairobi from 15 to 26 May 2000. The Assembly encouraged coastal States to enhance their national capacity and establish or improve their marine management systems in order to promote integrated marine management, the protection of the marine environment and ecosystem, and the sustainable development and utilization of marine resources, and invited the relevant agencies of the UN system and regional organizations to take effective measures to assist the coastal States in this regard.

19. The Assembly reaffirmed its decision to undertake an annual review and evaluation of the implementation of the Convention on the Law of the Sea and other developments relating to ocean affairs and the law of the sea, taking into account Assembly resolution 54/33 establishing the Consultative Process to facilitate the review of developments in ocean affairs, and requested the Secretary-General to convene the third meeting of the Consultative Process in New York from 8 to 15 April 2002. The Assembly also recommended that, in view of the forthcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development, in its deliberations on the report of the Secretary-General on oceans and the law of the sea at its third meeting, the Consultative Process organize its discussions around certain areas, including 'Protection and preservation of the marine environment'.

20. On the same day, the General Assembly adopted resolution 56/13 on the '**Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks**'. By

the text all States were urged to cooperate to ensure the effective conservation, management and long-term sustainability of such stocks. The Assembly also urged States to coordinate their activities and cooperate directly, or through relevant regional fisheries management organizations, in the implementation of the International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter, and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing. States were asked to develop national plans of action on illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and management of fishing capacity; to promote information-sharing; and to encourage the full participation of all stakeholders. States were also encouraged to integrate environmental protection requirements, especially those resulting from multilateral environmental agreements, in efforts to conserve and manage such fish stocks.

21. General Assembly resolution 56/200 of 21 December 2001, addresses the **‘Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy, including the implementation of the World Solar Programme, 1996-2005’**. The Assembly, emphasizing that the World Solar Programme is aimed at encompassing all forms of new and renewable energy, including solar, thermal, photovoltaic, biomass, wind, mini-hydro, tidal, ocean and geothermal forms, called for further action to ensure that the World Solar Programme is fully integrated into the mainstream of the efforts of the UN system towards attaining the objective of sustainable development. The Assembly reiterated its call on all relevant funding institutions to support efforts to develop the renewable energy sector in developing countries on the basis of environmentally friendly renewable sources of energy of demonstrated viability, while taking into account the development structure of energy-based economies of developing countries, and to assist in the attainment of the levels of investment necessary to expand energy supplies beyond urban areas. The Assembly also recognized that rural energy services should be designed to maximize local ownership, as appropriate. The Assembly invited the international community to support the efforts of developing countries to move towards sustainable patterns of energy production and consumption. It requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with UNESCO and in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the GEF, **UNEP** and other relevant organizations, to submit to the Assembly at its fifty-eighth session a report on the concrete action being taken for the promotion of new and renewable sources of energy, including the effective implementation of and the mobilization of resources for the World Solar Programme.

22. The General Assembly adopted resolution 56/192 on **‘Status of preparations for the International Year of Freshwater, 2003’**, on 21 December 2001. Reaffirming the Millennium Declaration goal of reducing by half, between 2000 and 2015, the proportion of people who are unable to reach or to afford safe drinking water, the Assembly welcomed the activities undertaken by States, the UN Secretariat, organizations of the UN system that are engaged in inter-agency work related to freshwater, and major groups in preparation for the International Year. It further encouraged Member States, the UN system and major groups to take advantage of the International Year to raise awareness of the essential importance of freshwater resources for satisfying basic human needs, health and food production and the preservation of ecosystems, as well as for economic and social development in general, and to promote action at the local, national, regional and international levels, and in this context calls for high priority to be given to the serious freshwater problems facing many regions, especially in the developing countries. The Assembly further encouraged States, relevant international organizations and major groups to support activities related to the International Year through voluntary contributions.

23. The General Assembly adopted a resolution on a **‘Global Code of Ethics for Tourism’** (56/212) on 21 December 2001. Recalling, *inter alia*, its resolution proclaiming 2002 as the International Year of Ecotourism, the Assembly took note with interest of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism adopted at the thirteenth session of the General Assembly of the World Tourism Organization (WTO), which outlines principles to guide tourism development, with the objective of minimizing the negative impact of tourism on environment and on cultural heritage while maximizing the benefits of tourism in promoting sustainable development and poverty alleviation as well as understanding among nations. Emphasizing the need for the promotion of a responsible and sustainable tourism that could be beneficial to all sectors of society, the Assembly invited Governments and other stakeholders in the tourism sector to consider introducing the contents of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism in relevant laws, regulations and professional practices.

24. On 21 December 2001, the Assembly adopted resolution 56/194 on **‘International cooperation to reduce the impact of the El Niño phenomenon’**. By its resolution, the Assembly, *inter alia*, noted the contributions made by regional and global climate-study organizations and specialized Internet information services, which have led to improved scientific understanding and prediction capabilities in the area of climate variability. It reaffirmed the importance of developing strategies at the national, subregional, regional and international levels that aim to prevent, mitigate and repair the damage caused by natural disasters resulting from the El Niño phenomenon. The Assembly encouraged the international centre for the study of the El Niño phenomenon, once established in Ecuador, to strengthen its links with other relevant regional and global climate-study organizations, in order to ensure an effective and efficient use of the available resources. It called upon the Secretary-General and the relevant UN organs, funds and programmes, in particular those taking part in the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), to adopt the necessary measures to support the establishment of the research centre, and invited the international community to provide scientific, technical and financial assistance and cooperation for this purpose, as well as to strengthen other centres devoted to studying the El Niño phenomenon. The Assembly also welcomed the establishment of the Working Group on Climate and Disasters, and invited the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction and the secretariat of the ISDR to ensure functional synergies among the working groups dealing with climate variability, social and economic vulnerability, and effectiveness of early warning systems.

25. In a related resolution (56/195) on the **‘International Strategy for Disaster Reduction’**, adopted on 21 December 2001, the Assembly emphasized the multisectoral, interdisciplinary and cross-cutting nature of natural disaster reduction, and stressed that continued interaction, cooperation and partnerships among the institutions concerned are considered essential to achieve jointly agreed objectives and priorities. The Assembly recognized that disaster reduction is an important element contributing to sustainable development and that it should be taken into account in the preparatory process for the World Summit on Sustainable Development. It also stressed the need for the international community to demonstrate the firm political determination required to utilize scientific and technical knowledge to reduce the vulnerability to natural disasters and environmental hazards.

26. The Assembly, reaffirming that the Inter-Agency Task Force should serve as the main forum within the UN system for devising strategies and policies for disaster reduction and ensuring complementarity of action by agencies, decided to review the activities of the Task Force in 2003. The Assembly further requested relevant organizations of the UN system to support the achievement of the goals of the Strategy, including by seconding technical staff to the secretariat for the Strategy. The Assembly invited Governments and relevant organizations of the UN system to strengthen national participation in the implementation of ISDR. It also recognized the urgent need to further develop and make use of the existing scientific and technical knowledge to reduce vulnerability to natural disasters, and emphasized the need for developing countries to have access to technology. It also called on Governments and UN agencies to collaborate more closely in the sharing of disaster response and mitigation information.

27. The Assembly reiterated the need to continue international cooperation to reduce the impact of the El Niño phenomenon, within the framework of ISDR. It recognized the importance of early warning as an essential element in the culture of prevention, and encouraged renewed efforts at all levels to contribute to natural hazard monitoring and impact prediction, the development and transfer of technology, capacity-building for disaster preparedness, the detection of natural hazards and the issuance and communication of early warning, as well as education and professional training, public information and awareness-raising activities, and stressed the need for appropriate action in response to early warning. It also reaffirmed the need to strengthen the international framework for the improvement of early warning systems and disaster preparedness by developing an effective international mechanism for early warning, including the transfer to developing countries of technology, which ensures that vulnerable people receive appropriate and timely information, and by expanding and improving existing systems, in particular those under the auspices of the UN, as an integral part of ISDR.

28. In another related resolution (56/103) on **‘International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development’**, the Assembly called upon all relevant States to adopt and implement legislative and other appropriate measures to mitigate the effects of natural disasters. The Assembly stressed the importance of strengthening international cooperation in the provision of humanitarian assistance in support of the efforts of the affected States in dealing with natural disasters. The Assembly also stressed the need for partnership among Governments of the affected countries, relevant humanitarian organizations and specialized companies to promote training, access, and use of technologies to strengthen preparedness for and response to natural disasters. It encourages the further use of space-based and ground-based remote sensing technologies in these efforts as well as the sharing of relevant geographical data. It stressed the need to enhance the transfer of current technologies and corresponding know-how, in particular to developing countries, on concessional and preferential terms. States were encouraged to sign or ratify the Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations. Further, the Secretary-General was asked to continue cooperating with relevant organization partners in compiling a directory of disaster mitigation capacity at the national, regional and international levels, and a Directory of Advanced Technologies for Disaster Response as a new part of the Central Register of Disaster Management Capacities.

29. The Assembly adopted resolution 56/198 on the **‘Further Implementation of the outcome of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS)’** on 21 December 2001. By its resolution, the Assembly, recognizing the specific problems faced by SIDS, reiterated the urgent need for strong and effective implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS and of the Declaration and review document adopted by the Assembly at its twenty-second special session. The Assembly welcomed efforts at the national, subregional and regional levels to implement the Programme of Action, and invited the relevant organs and agencies of the UN system, within their respective mandates, to reflect measures for the implementation of the Programme of Action in their programmes. The Assembly also invited donors, as well as all relevant organs and agencies of the UN, to provide appropriate support to the interregional preparatory meeting of SIDS to be held in preparation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development; and invited all relevant stakeholders, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector to participate fully in the activities identified for the further implementation of and effective follow-up to the Programme of Action. The Assembly further urged all relevant organizations to finalize as a matter of urgency the work on the development of a vulnerability index. The Assembly also called on the Secretary-General to consider further cost-effective ways and means of increasing and improving the UN system-wide coordination of and dissemination of information on activities in support of SIDS and the Programme of Action, through the SIDS Unit in the UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), including concrete measures for improving UN system coordination.

30. By its resolution (56/205) on the **‘Special session of the General Assembly for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)’**, adopted on 21 December, the Assembly emphasized the importance, at all levels of policy-making and in the context of sustainable development, of giving high priority to the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and the Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium, and recognized that the overall thrust of the new strategic vision of the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and its emphasis on the two global campaigns on secure tenure and urban governance, are strategic points of entry for the effective implementation of the Habitat Agenda. The Assembly requested the relevant bodies of the UN system, including the specialized agencies, programmes, funds and regional commissions, as well as the World Bank and regional development banks, consistent with their respective mandates, to fully support the effective implementation at all levels of the Habitat Agenda and the Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium.

31. In a related resolution 56/206 on **‘Strengthening the mandate and status of the Commission on Human Settlements and the status, role, and functions of the UN Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)’**, adopted on 21 December 2001, the Assembly decided to transform the Commission and its secretariat, the Centre, including its Foundation, with effect from 1 January 2002, into the UN Human Settlements Programme, to be known as UN-Habitat, which would have a governing body and a secretariat.

It also took a number of decisions regarding the status, composition, objectives, functions and responsibilities of the governing body, as well as the secretariat.

32. The General Assembly adopted resolution 56/204 entitled **‘Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources’** on 21 December 2001, by a vote of 148 in favour to four against, with four abstentions. Reaffirming the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the population of the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources, including land and water, the Assembly called on Israel not to exploit, to cause loss or depletion of or to endanger the natural resources in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan. It also recognized the right of the Palestinian people to claim restitution as a result of any exploitation, loss or depletion of or danger to their natural resources, and expressed the hope that this issue will be dealt with in the framework of the final status negotiations between the Palestinian and Israeli sides.

33. By its resolution 56/50 on the **‘Effects of atomic radiation’**, adopted on 10 December 2001, the Assembly, concerned about the potentially harmful effects on present and future generations resulting from the levels of radiation to which mankind and the environment are exposed, commended the UN Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR) for the valuable contribution it has been making in the course of the past 46 years to wider knowledge and understanding of the levels, effects and risks of ionizing radiation, and for fulfilling its original mandate with scientific authority and independence of judgement. The Assembly requested the Scientific Committee to continue its work, including its important activities to increase knowledge of the levels, effects and risks of ionizing radiation from all sources, and endorsed the intentions and plans of the Scientific Committee for its future activities of scientific review and assessment and requested it to continue at its next session the review of the important problems in the field of ionizing radiation and to report thereon to the Assembly at its fifty-seventh session. The Assembly requested **UNEP** to continue providing support for the effective conduct of the work of the Scientific Committee and for the dissemination of its findings to the Assembly, the scientific community and the public. The Assembly further invited Member States, the organizations of the UN system and NGOs concerned to provide further relevant data about doses, effects and risks from various sources of radiation, which would greatly help in the preparation of future reports of the Scientific Committee to the General Assembly.

34. By its resolution 56/51 of 10 December 2001, entitled **‘International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space’**, the Assembly endorsed the recommendation of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, at its thirty-ninth session, consider, *inter alia*, matters relating to remote-sensing of the Earth by satellite, including applications for developing countries and monitoring of the Earth’s environment. The Assembly also recommended that more attention be paid and political support be provided to all matters relating to the protection and the preservation of the outer space environment, especially those potentially affecting the Earth’s environment.

35. By its resolution 56/4, adopted on 5 November 2001, the General Assembly, considering that damage to the environment in times of armed conflict impairs ecosystems and natural resources long beyond the period of conflict, and often extends beyond the limits of national territories and the present generation, designated 6 November each year for the **‘Observance of the International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict’**.

36. The General Assembly adopted resolution 56/24F entitled, **‘Observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament and arms control’**, on 29 November 2001. In it, the Assembly recognized that it is necessary to take duly into account the agreements adopted at UNCED, as well as prior relevant agreements, in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament and arms limitation, and reaffirmed that international disarmament forums should take fully into account the relevant environmental norms in negotiating treaties and agreements on disarmament and arms limitation. The Assembly called upon States to adopt measures so as to contribute to ensuring the application of scientific and technological progress in the framework of international security, disarmament and other related spheres, without detriment to the environment or to its effective contribution

to attaining sustainable development, and invited States to communicate to the Secretary-General information on the measures they have adopted to promote the objectives envisaged in the resolution.

37. Environment was also addressed in certain resolutions adopted by the Assembly on 19 December 2001 dealing with human rights. In resolution 56/165 on **‘Globalization and its impact on the full enjoyment of all human rights’**, the Assembly noted that globalization is not merely an economic process but also has social, political, environmental, cultural and legal dimensions, which have an impact on the full enjoyment of all human rights. In another resolution (56/151) on the **‘Promotion of a democratic and equitable international order’** the Assembly affirmed that a democratic and equitable international order requires, *inter alia*, the realization of the entitlement of every person and all peoples to a healthy environment. Furthermore, in resolution 56/155 on the **‘The right to food’**, it was explicitly recognised that it is intolerable that 826 million people, most of them women and children, throughout the world and particularly in developing countries, do not have enough food to meet their basic nutritional needs, which infringes upon their fundamental human rights and at the same time can generate additional pressures on the environment in ecologically fragile areas.

38. On 11 December 2001, the General Assembly adopted resolution 56/76 entitled **‘Towards global partnerships’**, which stressed that the principles and approaches that governed such partnerships should be built on the firm foundation of United Nations purposes. The Assembly encouraged the private sector to accept and implement the principle of good corporate citizenship based on the three pillars of economic development, social development and environmental protection, as embodied in the Global Compact initiative of the Secretary-General, among others. It also stressed the need for international cooperation to strengthen the participation of enterprises, especially small and medium-sized enterprises, business associations, foundations and non-governmental organizations from developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

39. By its resolution 56/95 on the **‘Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit’** of 14 December 2001, the Assembly, reaffirming the need to maintain the will and momentum of the Millennium Summit as well as the importance of a comprehensive and balanced approach in the implementation of and follow-up to the Millennium Declaration, recommended that the “Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration” submitted by the Secretary-General (document A/56/326) be considered as a useful guide in the implementation of the Millennium Declaration by the UN system. The Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare, drawing upon the road map and in accordance with its resolution 55/162, an annual report and a comprehensive report every five years on progress achieved by the UN system and Member States towards implementing the Millennium Declaration, and requested that the annual reports focus on cross-cutting and cross-sectoral issues, as well as on the major areas set forth in the road map, while the quinquennial comprehensive reports examine progress achieved towards implementing all the commitments made in the Declaration. In this regard, the Assembly invited the UN system, in cooperation with Member States, to adopt specific measures to give widespread publicity to the Millennium Declaration and to increase the dissemination of information thereon.

40. Finally, in response to a report on improved utilization of conference facilities at the UN Office at Nairobi (UNON) (A/56/133 and Corr.1), the General Assembly in its resolution 56/242 of 24 December 2001 on the **‘Pattern of Conferences’**, reaffirmed the general principle established in the headquarters rule, and that all meetings related to environment and human settlements that are organized by UNEP and UNCHS (Habitat) should be held at Nairobi. The Assembly also welcomed the establishment of a permanent UNON interpretation service, and noted with satisfaction that the conference-servicing facility at UNON is becoming organizationally, functionally and budgetarily an integral part of the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services. It also noted with appreciation the increase in the number of multilingual meetings to be held at UNON and with the participation of the Nairobi interpretation team elsewhere in 2001 and 2002, as well as the cost-saving effect of the establishment of the Nairobi interpretation service for the regular budget in terms of temporary assistance. The Assembly further noted the improvement in the rate of utilization of conference facilities at UNON, and urged all subsidiary bodies of the UNEP Governing Council and the Commission on Human Settlements, as well as Member States, intergovernmental bodies and regional and other major groupings, to increase their use of the conference

facilities at Nairobi, and requested the Secretary-General to assist these bodies in improving the situation and to continue to intensify efforts being made by UNON to attract more meetings to its facilities. The Assembly encouraged all UN bodies and expert groups not subject to the headquarters rule to hold some of their meetings at UNON and strongly discouraged any invitation for hosting meetings that would violate the headquarters rule. The Assembly also reiterated its request to the Secretary-General to consider improving and modernizing the conference facilities at UNON in order to accommodate adequately major meetings and conferences.

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