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**GLOBAL MINISTERIAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM**

**CONSIDERATION OF THE FUTURE OF THE HIGH-LEVEL COMMITTEE OF  
MINISTERS AND OFFICIALS**

This information note contains the report of the meeting of the Bureau of the High-Level Committee of Ministers and Officials of the United Nations Environment Programme held in Geneva on 2 April 2000. This note has been prepared to support consideration by the Committee of provisional agenda item 3.

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**REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE BUREAU OF THE HIGH LEVEL COMMITTEE OF  
MINISTERS AND OFFICIALS OF THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT  
PROGRAMME GENEVA, 2 APRIL 2000**

1. A meeting of the Bureau of the High-Level Committee of Ministers and Officials (HLCOMO) was held in Geneva Switzerland on 2 April 2000. The meeting was opened by H.E. Mr. Simon K. Moyo (Zimbabwe), Chairman of the HLCOMO. The following attended the meeting: Mr Wang Zhijia (China), Mr Janusz Radziejowski (Poland), Ms. Atheline Haynes (Barbados) and H.E. Mr Philippe Roch (Switzerland). The meeting was also attended by Dr. Klaus Töpfer, Executive Director of UNEP, Mr Shafqat Kakakhel, Deputy Executive Director of UNEP and Ms. Beverly Miller, Secretary of the HLCOMO.
2. The meeting considered the role and mandate of HLCOMO following the adoption of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 53/242 on the Report of the Secretary General on Environment and Human Settlement and, in particular, the establishment of the Global Ministerial Environment Forum.
3. The Bureau was of the view that, since its establishment in 1997, the HLCOMO has successfully fulfilled its mandate as contained in decision 19/32 of the Governing Council. It provided a unique high-level political framework during the inter-sessional period of the Governing Council. It succeeded in providing useful and timely political guidance and advice to the Executive Director. It played a leading role in assisting UNEP during a difficult period of its existence in overcoming structural challenges it faced. It contributed to enhancing the profile of UNEP and consolidating its revitalization process.
4. The Bureau was also of the view that the establishment of the Global Ministerial Environment Forum should be fully taken into account by the twenty-first session of the Governing Council during its review of the governance of UNEP called for in decision 19/32, paragraph 16, which provides that “this governance structure shall be reviewed by the Governing Council at its twenty-first session with a view to assessing its effectiveness taking into account any relevant results of the reform process of the United Nations system”.
5. Accordingly, the Bureau was of the view that the decision regarding the future of HLCOMO should be taken by the twenty-first session of the Governing Council to be held in Nairobi in February 2001. The Bureau noted that in doing so the Governing Council will benefit from the lessons learned and the experience gained through the convening of the First Global Ministerial Environment Forum/Sixth Special Session of the Governing Council, to be held in Malmö, Sweden on 29-31 May 2000.
6. The Bureau felt that the future of HLCOMO is an issue to be considered by HLCOMO itself and not only by its Bureau. It was of the view that the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in The Hague in November 2000, would provide a good opportunity to convene the fifth meeting of HLCOMO. It requested the Secretariat to make the necessary arrangements for such a meeting which will also serve as a useful and timely opportunity for providing political guidance for the preparation of the twenty-first session of the Governing Council, the follow-up, as appropriate, of the Malmö meeting as well as the environmental dimension of the Millennium Summit of the United Nations General Assembly.
7. The Bureau recommended that in reviewing the future of HLCOMO, the need for a high level intergovernmental consultative mechanism during the inter-sessional period of the Governing Council and the Global Ministerial Environment Forum should be considered. The Bureau was of the strong view that such a mechanism should be flexible in nature and based on the principle of equitable geographical representation. The need to involve the participation of the vulnerable countries including the small island developing states was emphasized. Such a mechanism would offer a useful framework for emphasizing the regional perspective in global environmental policy guidance provided by Governments to the Executive Director and to UNEP. In this context the Bureau discussed the option of a consolidated/extended Bureau of the Governing Council, the Global Ministerial Environment Forum and the Committee of Permanent Representatives as a possible inter-sessional consultative mechanism. However the Bureau was of the opinion that such a mechanism should be based on clearly defined terms of reference and mandate.

8. The Bureau entrusted the Executive Director of UNEP to undertake consultations with member states with a view to facilitating the decision on this issue to be taken at the twenty-first session of the Governing Council.

9. The Bureau thanked H.E. Mr Philippe Roch and the Government of Switzerland for their generous hospitality.

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Monday, 03 April 2000, 14:20