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Environment Programme**

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Item 4 (e) of the provisional agenda**

Policy issues: international environmental governance

International environmental governance

Report of the Executive Director

Summary

The present report summarizes actions taken or proposed on international environmental governance in the implementation of United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum decisions SS.VII/1 and SS.VIII/1, on international environmental governance. The following issues are discussed:

- (a) Universal membership of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum;
- (b) The Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and capacity-building;
- (c) Strengthening the scientific base of UNEP;
- (d) Strengthening the financing of UNEP;
- (e) Issues concerning multilateral environmental agreements;
- (f) Enhanced coordination across the United Nations system, including the Environment Management Group.

* Re-issued for technical reasons.

** UNEP/GC/24/1.

I. Suggested action by the Governing Council

1. 1. The Governing Council may wish to take into account the following draft decision text in its consideration of a decision concerning international environmental governance:

24/[...] **Implementation of decision SS.VII/1 on international environmental governance**

The Governing Council,

Recalling General Assembly Resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972, the Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme¹ and the Malmö Ministerial Declaration,²

Also recalling General Assembly resolutions 57/251 of 20 December 2002, 58/209 of 23 December 2003 and 59/226 of 22 December 2004,

Further recalling its decision SS.VIII/1 of 31 March 2004 and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development,³ which emphasized the full implementation of decision SS.VII/1 of 15 February 2002,

Recalling the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building, which it adopted by its decision 23/1 of 25 February 2005,

Welcoming the report of the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment,⁴

Having considered the reports of the Executive Director on international environmental governance⁵, on the measures taken for the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building and a proposal for the further implementation of the Plan in the 2008–2009 biennium,⁶ and on strengthening the scientific base of UNEP,⁷

I

Universal membership of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum

1. *Takes note* of the outcomes of the consideration by the General Assembly at its sixty-first session of the important but complex issue of establishing universal membership of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum;

II

Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building

2. *Requests* the Executive Director to continue to give high priority to the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building as part of the implementation of the approved programme of work of the United Nations Environment Programme;

¹ Governing Council decision 19/1 of 7 February 1997, annex.

² Report of the Governing Council on the Work of its global ministerial environment forum/sixth special session, UNEP/GCSS.VI/9, annex I.

³ *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development*, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

⁴ Report of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel entitled "Delivering as One" of 9 November 2006.

⁵ UNEP/GC.24/3.

⁶ UNEP/GC.24/3/Add.1.

⁷ UNEP/GC.24/3/Add.2.

III

Strengthening the scientific base of the United Nations Environment Programme

3. *Welcomes* the consultative process on strengthening the scientific base of the United Nations Environment Programme as facilitated by the Executive Director and the valuable inputs made by Governments and other stakeholders which have resulted in the proposed Environment Watch strategy;⁸

4. *Recognizes* that the key challenge for the United Nations Environment Programme is to serve as the environmental early warning mechanism of the international community and to monitor, assess and report on the state of the global environment as recommended by the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on United Nations System Wide Coherence in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment, and recognizes further that this can be achieved through a network that draws on existing bodies including academic institutions and centres of excellence and the scientific competence of specialized agencies and the scientific subsidiary bodies of multilateral environmental agreements;

5. *Underlines* the vital importance in a globalizing world of enhancing infrastructures and capacities which can sustain cooperation on environmental data and information and which can lead to reduced transaction costs for national reporting, natural resource accounting, decision making, mainstreaming of environment into development, implementation of multilateral environmental agreements and achievement of national and international development goals;

6. *Welcomes* the draft strategy presented in the annex to the present decision⁹, which builds on the existing programmatic direction, documented achievements and ongoing activities of the United Nations Environment Programme, and requests the Executive Director, while implementing the approved programme of work, to consult with member States and partners with a view to further improving the strategy as an integral part of the wider strategic vision of the United Nations Environment Programme and soliciting the participation as partners with the United Nations Environment Programme in the implementation of such a strategy of member States, United Nations agencies, multilateral environmental agreements, the scientific community, including the global observing systems, and financial institutions, including the Global Environment Facility;

IV

Strengthening the financing of the United Nations Environment Programme

7. *Emphasizes* the need for stable, adequate and predictable financial resources for the United Nations Environment Programme and the Environment Fund, in the context of the United Nations regular budget, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII);

8. *Reaffirms* its support for the provision of adequate, stable and predictable financing for the United Nations Environment Programme as an essential prerequisite for the strengthening of its capacity and functions, as well as for the effective coordination of the environmental component of sustainable development;

9. *Encourages* Governments, to the extent feasible, to contribute to the Environment Fund rather than to earmarked trust funds, with a view to enhancing the role of the Governing Council in setting the agenda of work and priorities of the United Nations Environment Programme;

10. *Also encourages* Governments, in order to further strengthen the financing of the United Nations Environment Programme and increase the level of the financial reserve as requested in paragraph 9 of Governing Council decision 23/3 of 25 February 2005, taking into account their economic and social circumstances, to make additional contributions to the Environment Fund in 2007 above those to be made in accordance with the voluntary indicative scale of contributions established by the Executive Director in accordance with decision SS.VII/1;

⁸ UNEP/GC.24/3/Add.2.

⁹ The draft strategy is presented in the annex to the present report.

11. *Requests* the Executive Director, in accordance with paragraph 19 of the appendix to decision SS.VII/1, to notify all United Nations Member States of the voluntary indicative scale of contributions which he intends to propose for the biennium 2008–2009 and urges each Member State to inform the Executive Director whether it will use the proposed voluntary indicative scale of contributions;

12. *Encourages* Governments, taking into account their economic and social circumstances, to make their voluntary contributions to the Environment Fund in 2008–2009 in an amount equal to or greater than that suggested by the voluntary indicative scale of contributions or on the basis of the other voluntary options listed in paragraph 18 of the appendix to decision SS.VII/1;

13. *Requests* the Executive Director to continue his efforts in seeking an increase in funding, from all sources, for strengthening the financial base of the United Nations Environment Programme;

V

Issues related to multilateral environmental agreements

14. *Takes note* of the activities undertaken by the Executive Director to increase the effectiveness of, and the coordination and synergy among, multilateral environmental agreements, as well as those activities supporting Governments in their efforts to better implement, comply with and enforce multilateral environmental agreements, taking into account the autonomous decision-making authority of the conferences of the parties to such agreements and the need to promote the environmental dimension of sustainable development among other relevant United Nations organizations;

VI

Enhanced coordination across the United Nations system, including the Environment Management Group

15. *Recognizes* that greater coordination within the United Nations system at the level of headquarters of United Nations bodies, funds, programmes and agencies should promote coherence in the activities of those bodies, funds, programmes and agencies at the country level, while greater coordination efforts at the country level should promote the coherence of the activities of the United Nations system at the international level;

16. *Emphasizes* that the United Nations Environment Programme should strengthen the coordination of United Nations system-wide environmental policies in order to improve cohesion and consistency among the policies of the environmental programmes of the United Nations system;

17. *Invites* the Secretary-General to consider strengthening the Environment Management Group by giving it a clearer mandate that would allow it to better support the United Nations Environment Programme in its efforts to support and enhance the policies of the environmental programmes of the United Nations system and requests the Executive Director to strengthen further the focus of the Environment Management Group.

I. Introduction: The United Nations reform process

2. The 2005 World Summit Outcome,¹⁰ in paragraph 169, calls for, among other things, enhanced coordination, strengthened scientific knowledge, assessment and cooperation and better integration of environmental activities in sustainable development, including through capacity-building. Pursuant to that paragraph, the General Assembly at its sixtieth session, upon the proposal of the President of the Assembly, established an Informal Consultative Process on the Institutional Framework for the United Nations' Environmental Activities.¹¹

3. The Secretary-General further established a High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment. The General Assembly's Informal Consultative Process on the Institutional Framework for the United Nations' Environmental Activities concluded its first round of consultations in June 2006¹² and will reconvene in January 2007. The Secretary-General's High-level Panel has issued a report containing recommendations on 9 November 2006¹³ and the General Assembly is expected to consider those recommendations that require inter-governmental approval early in 2007.

4. Both the Informal Consultative Process on the Institutional Framework for the United Nations' Environmental Activities and the High-level Panel have stressed that, while there has been a steady increase in policy guidance and there have been some successes, the world's natural resource base continues to be used in an unsustainable manner and environmental conditions continue to deteriorate unabated. A growing gap is evident in normative and analytical work on the one hand and the operational level on the other. As a result, resources are not being utilized efficiently and capacity-building efforts at all levels are failing to achieve the optimum effect. Environmental concerns thus need to be integrated more fully not only into United Nations development activities, but also into national economic planning processes and the provision of sound scientific advice to decision makers. Mainstreaming the environment is a theme strongly emphasized by the Panel in its recommendations.

5. At the Informal Consultative Process on the Institutional Framework for the United Nations' Environmental Activities, Member States identified a number of key areas in which improvements can be made. While the large number of bodies involved with environmental work have produced valuable initiatives and programmes in specific areas, they have also resulted in fragmentation and uncoordinated approaches in both policy development and implementation. Developing countries in particular face a heavy burden in participating in multilateral environmental processes and complying with and effectively implementing legal instruments, including complying with reporting requirements and achieving national level coordination. Capacity-building, technology transfer and increased financial support for environmental activities are central factors for treaty compliance and implementation.

6. Broad support has also been expressed for the idea that the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) should be strengthened and should play a more visible role in the coordination of environmental issues. Mainstreaming of environmental sustainability, in collaboration particularly with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), has been advocated by many members of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, as has the improvement of the scientific, assessment and early warning capacities of UNEP.

7. In its report the High-level Panel calls for UNEP to be upgraded so that it can more authoritatively play the role of the "environment policy pillar" of the United Nations system. The Panel has also called for, among other things, better coordination at normative levels (such as formulation of policies or setting standards), increased efficiencies and coordination among multilateral environmental agreements, greater funding for UNEP and more effective use of the Global Environment Facility by its implementing agencies.

¹⁰ General Assembly resolution 60/1 of 6 September 2005.

¹¹ In his letter dated 26 January 2006 to all Permanent Missions of Member States and Observers to the United Nations, the President of the Assembly announced the designation of the Permanent Representative of Mexico and Switzerland as the Co-Chairs of the informal process.

¹² Co-chairs' Summary of the Informal Consultative Process on the Institutional Framework for the United Nations' Environmental Activities was issued in New York on 27 June 2006 by the Permanent Representatives of Mexico and Switzerland, which was presented by the President of the General Assembly to all Permanent Representatives and Permanent Observers to the United Nations in his letter dated 6 July 2006.

¹³ Report of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel entitled "Delivering as One" of 9 November 2006.

II. Universal membership of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum

8. In its resolution 59/226 the General Assembly noted that the question of universal membership of the Council/Forum remained an important but complex issue and that a difference of views on the issue persisted. It further noted that the matter would be considered at the twenty-third session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum and requested further views to be submitted for incorporation in a report to be prepared by the Secretary-General for the consideration of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session.

9. The Executive Director subsequently invited Governments to provide further views on the question of universal membership and presented another report on the issue¹⁴ to the Council/Forum at its twenty-third session, held in February 2005. In paragraphs 10 and 11 of its decision 23/1, the Governing Council noted the differences in the views expressed thus far and decided to consider the question further during ministerial-level consultations at its ninth special session, in 2006, with a view to contributing to the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session.

10. At its ninth special session, held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from 7 to 9 February 2006, the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, further considered the question of universal membership during ministerial consultations within the overall context of follow-up to the 2005 World Summit Outcome. Again there was a divergence of views among member States on the matter and no consensus was achieved.

11. During the ministerial consultations at the ninth special session of the Council/Forum, some representatives supported the introduction of universal membership, saying that it would strengthen the decision-making functions of the Governing Council and UNEP as a whole. Others, without expressing their positions on the matter, indicated that it deserved further consideration and reflection. Some expressed the view that it was necessary to identify additional value and benefits that might be attained by introducing universal membership and to analyse whether it might involve higher administrative costs. Others opposed the introduction of universal membership without qualification, stating that the existing structure was adequate. The view was also expressed that the question of universal membership should be addressed by the Secretary-General's High Level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence in the areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment, as well as at the relevant consultations to be carried out by the General Assembly.

12. During the sixty-first session of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General, as requested, presented a report on the question of universal membership,¹⁵ in which he presented the views of United Nations Member States.

13. The views of those Governments which have expressed their support for universal membership of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum may be summarized as follows:

(a) That strengthening international environmental governance should result in a reinforced UNEP and that there is a need for better political guidance which would enhance the ability of UNEP to address emerging issues and make decisions more efficiently and effectively. Such strengthening should be through a combination or package of measures, based on the outcomes of the seventh special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum. Universal membership of UNEP must be a crucial element in the process of strengthening UNEP;

(b) That, since UNEP is responsible for ensuring environmental well-being on a global scale and for coordinating the activities of countries, its decisions should be based on direct discussions and be adopted with the equal participation of all Member States of the United Nations;

(c) That a sense of ownership of UNEP activities is important and that the current system of elected representation in the UNEP Governing Council hinders the full participation of all countries by excluding countries not represented on the Governing Council from the decision-making process;

(d) That universal membership would make decision-making more participatory and more transparent, lead to a greater spirit of democracy and enhance the legitimacy of UNEP decisions relating to its normative and catalytic role, which could strengthen countries' commitment to implementation;

¹⁴ UNEP/GC.23/6.

¹⁵ A/61/322.

(e) That voting rights would enhance the sense of responsibility of each country for the decisions adopted and the obligations entered into by UNEP and would form the basis for a more responsible, active and joint participation by all countries in environmental activities on a global scale;

(f) That universal membership might make it necessary to explore other measures necessary to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of decision-making. That could be achieved by combining the introduction of universal membership with the creation of an executive board which could function as a programmatic decision-making body meeting on a more regular basis than the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum. Consideration should be given to ensuring equitable geographical representation on such a board and also to the relationship of such a board to the Committee of Permanent Representatives of UNEP.

14. The views of those Governments that were against universal membership of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum may be summarized as follows:

(a) That subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly are normally governed either by an Executive Board or an Executive Committee with a limited membership, while very few subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly have universal membership. The limited membership of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum is therefore in accordance with the rules and practice of subsidiary bodies and programmes of the United Nations General Assembly. By creating universal membership, UNEP would be breaking away from established practice in the United Nations system. Giving UNEP universal membership would imply that universal membership should be adopted across the United Nations system;

(b) That the proposition that the lack of universal membership reduces UNEP legitimacy and support implies that the decisions of all United Nations bodies of limited membership are illegitimate or lacking support, which is not correct;

(c) That the lack of universal membership does not prevent entities from carrying out their important work and that universal membership of UNEP would likely to lead to significantly higher administrative costs to the organization at the expense of its environmental mandate;

(d) That in practice the current membership of the UNEP Governing Council does not limit decision making by consensus and very few come to a vote. Governing Council decisions are already taken in a manner that is extremely open and fully transparent both to Governments and to non-governmental organizations. No one has identified a Governing Council decision that has disadvantaged or ignored the views of a country because it lacked the right to cast a formal vote;

(e) That the current system of membership is working adequately and there is no need to change it. The current composition of the UNEP Governing Council reflects equitable geographical representation and also provides an adequate balance between developed and developing countries. Introducing universal membership would make the operation of UNEP difficult and its efficient administration impossible. Universal membership would allow all member States to participate in the decision-making process, which would result in divergent opinions and consequently make the coordinated management of the Governing Council itself difficult;

(f) That history illustrates that universal participation, not universal membership, is important for the functioning of UNEP. All countries, members and non-members alike, benefit from universal participation and have a voice at UNEP Governing Council sessions. The establishment of the Global Ministerial Environment Forum further enhanced the political profile and participatory nature of the Governing Council and provided additional opportunities for inclusive multilateral dialogue. All countries' ministers are encouraged to participate actively in the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum. Countries with an interest in UNEP activities are given a voice and a role through universal participation. All United Nations Member States are entitled to participate in the deliberations of the UNEP Governing Council. All United Nations Member States have the right to vote in the United Nations General Assembly on the outcomes of UNEP Governing Council sessions.

15. The General Assembly at its sixty-first session has before it two proposals. The first is to consider the question of universal membership again at the sixty-fifth session of the Assembly. The second is to consider the question of universal membership, together with the elements related to international environmental governance contained in Governing Council decision SS.VII/1 of 15 February 2002, in the context of the United Nations processes initiated in response to paragraph 169 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome.

III. Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building

16. In response to Governing Council decisions 23/1, 23/3 and 23/11 of 25 February 2005, the Executive Director has since the ninth special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum taken and proposed further measures for the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building, including a proposal for the further implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan in the 2008–2009 biennium. Information on such measures is set out in document UNEP/GC/24/3/Add.1.

IV. Strengthening the scientific base of UNEP

17. In paragraph 9 of its decision 23/1 II, the Governing Council requested the Executive Director to update the Environment Watch proposal, to submit the updated version to Governments for comment and to report thereon to the Council/Forum at its ninth special session. The Council/Forum did not take any decision on the matter at that session but during discussion of the issue, several representatives endorsed the need for further consultations in order to clarify how the Environment Watch system might meet the needs of Governments and be made to relate to existing national, regional and global structures. It was generally felt by the representatives that the Council/Forum should not consider Environment Watch for possible approval until it had been further improved.

18. A more detailed report on the matter is contained in document UNEP/GC/24/3/Add.2. It responds to the comments by the Council/Forum at its ninth special session and includes sections on a proposed strategy to be called “Environment Watch Strategy: Vision 2020”; information on how that strategy will be implemented by building on the existing programmatic directions, documented achievements and ongoing activities of UNEP; clarifications of expected contributions from and benefits for Governments and partners; clarifications of how the Environment Watch strategy might relate to existing national, regional and global structures; and suggested actions for consideration by the Council/Forum as part of its consideration of the larger issue of international environmental governance.

V. Strengthening the financing of UNEP

A. Implementation of the voluntary indicative scale of contributions

19. In its decision 23/1, the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum reaffirmed its support for the provision of adequate, stable and predictable financing for UNEP as an essential prerequisite for the strengthening of its capacity and functions, as well as effective coordination of the environmental component of sustainable development. The Council/Forum encouraged Governments, to the extent feasible, to move towards contributing to the Environment Fund in preference to contributing to earmarked trust funds, with a view to enhancing the role of the Governing Council in setting the agenda of work and priorities of UNEP. It also encouraged Governments, taking into account their economic and social circumstances, to contribute to the Environment Fund on the basis of either the voluntary indicative scale of contributions or any other of the voluntary options set forth in paragraph 18 of the appendix to decision SS.VII/1.

B. Voluntary indicative scale of contributions in 2003 and 2004–2005: pilot phases

20. In September 2002, pursuant to Governing Council decision SS.VII/1, the Executive Director sent a letter to all Governments of United Nations Member States inviting them to join the pilot phase of the implementation of the voluntary indicative scale of contributions in 2003.

21. The methodology used for developing the scale was based on the following main considerations:

- (a) Maintaining the voluntary character of contributions to the Environment Fund;
- (b) Broadening the donor base and inviting all United Nations Member States to consider making regular and adequate contributions to the Environment Fund;
- (c) Maintaining the level of high and adequate contributions by the Governments;

(d) Inviting countries contributing in an amount less than that indicated by the United Nations scale or below their previous high levels to increase their contributions gradually.

22. The main result achieved during the first pilot phase was a significant widening of the base for voluntary contributions. A total of 128 countries pledged and paid their contributions in 2003, an increase of over 70 per cent above the average of 74 countries contributing annually to the Environment Fund in previous years.

23. Another important result achieved during the pilot phase in 2003 was a 9 per cent increase in payments by Governments to the Environment Fund. Seventy-five Governments increased their pledges and payments compared to those of the previous year 2002.

24. Following decision SS.VII/1 and taking into account feedback from Governments during the first pilot phase in 2003 UNEP developed a new indicative scale of contributions for the biennium 2004-2005. The new scale envisioned an increase in annual contributions from \$60 million to \$65 million, equivalent to half the Environment Fund budget of \$130 million approved by the Governing Council for the biennium. One-hundred-nineteen Governments pledged and paid their contributions for 2004. Of those, 54 paid or pledged higher contributions than the year before, and the total of pledges and payments increased by approximately 13 per cent, partly as a result of the favourable exchange rate between the dollar and the currencies of the major donor countries.

25. In 2005, Governments continued to use the same voluntary indicative scale for the biennium and the increase in pledges and contributions was accordingly minimal. Although 33 Governments increased their payments, the total number of donor Governments was 110 compared to 119 for 2004, although it is expected that several more Governments will make delayed payments.

26. At its fifty-ninth session, the General Assembly welcomed the progress made in implementing the recommendations on strengthening the role and financial situation of UNEP contained in decision SS.VII/1 and the Secretary-General, in his report to the Economic and Social Council in 2005 on funding options and modalities for financing operational activities for development of the United Nations system¹⁶, acknowledged that the experience to that point with the voluntary indicative scale of contributions had been positive.

C. Voluntary indicative scale in 2006–2007: Extended pilot phase

27. In the light of decision 23/1, the Executive Director in mid-2005 developed a new voluntary indicative scale for the biennium 2006–2007, taking into account the same principles that had informed the 2004–2005 scale. The new scale took into consideration an increase in annual contributions from \$65 million to \$72 million, equivalent to half the Environment Fund budget of \$144 million approved by the Governing Council for the biennium. The Executive Director informed United Nations Member States of the proposed levels of voluntary contributions and urged them to inform UNEP as to whether they would make their voluntary contributions on the basis of the proposed voluntary indicative scale of contributions or under any of the other voluntary options set forth in paragraph 18 of the appendix to decision SS.VII/1.

28. As of mid-November 2006 contributions and pledges had been made by 103 Governments, 55 of which had increased their support compared to the previous year and more than 70 per cent of which had contributed in an amount equal to or exceeding the amount indicated by the voluntary indicative scale of contributions.

29. Not all Governments, however, increased their payments in accordance with the new voluntary indicative scale of contributions for 2006-2007. A number of major donor Governments decreased their contributions in 2006. As a result, and in spite of increases in payments by more than 50 Governments, the Environment Fund is expected to receive about \$10-12 million less than the target of \$72 million for 2006. This is undermining the capacity of UNEP to implement the approved programme of work for the biennium. Two urgent measures could be considered: First, additional voluntary contributions by the Governments that paid below the voluntary indicative scale of contributions, including those Governments that did not pay any contribution in 2006; and second, additional voluntary contributions by the Governments that already made adequate payments in 2006 and are willing to increase their support to UNEP in 2007 to ensure the efficient implementation of all programmed activities.

16 A/60/83-E/2005/72.

30. In 2006 the Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations analysed the recent trends in voluntary contributions to United Nations system organizations and their impact on programme delivery. The unit fully supported the concept of a voluntary indicative scale of contributions based on the model adopted by UNEP as a means to improve the predictability and adequacy of resources for those United Nations system organizations labouring under uncertain core funding.

D. More efficient and effective use of available resources, including the possibility of utilizing external management review mechanisms, taking into account the recommendations of prior reviews of UNEP management

31. Paragraph 15, subparagraph (b), of the appendix to decision SS.VII/1 mention the possibility of utilizing external management review mechanisms as part of efforts to ensure a more efficient and effective use of available resources in order to address the overall financial situation of UNEP. The secretariat has responded by implementing reviews carried out through various mechanisms, including:

(a) External experts commissioned by the UNEP Evaluation and Oversight Unit;

(b) The Office of Internal Oversight Services, set up by the General Assembly for the specific task of evaluating the management structures and practices of the United Nations Secretariat and United Nations agencies, funds and programmes;

(c) The Joint Inspection Unit, a long-standing statutory body set up by and reporting to the General Assembly and the governing bodies of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes;

(d) The external auditors of the United Nations;

(e) The UNEP management and organization review.

32. In 2005, the Executive Director initiated a comprehensive review of UNEP, including its management and organization. A report on the review was prepared with the assistance of a consulting company and submitted to the Executive Director in March 2006. It contained eight main recommendations focusing on how UNEP could most effectively play its role given the new context of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building and considering its strengths and challenges, including recommendations requesting the development a set of core management indicators for guiding results-based management and urging the improvement of processes and the enhancement of operations support functions such as the management of finance, human resources and information technology.

E. Greater mobilization of resources from the private sector and other major groups in accordance with applicable United Nations rules and procedures

33. UNEP continues to mobilize additional contributions from various non-governmental sources, including non-earmarked payments to the Environment Fund and earmarked contributions in support of priority UNEP projects and programme activities.

34. It seems that most non-governmental partners are not in favour of making non-earmarked contributions to the Environment Fund, as they consider such donations to be primarily the responsibility of Governments. A similar view was expressed by Governments when the question of resource mobilization for UNEP was discussed at the twenty-first session of the Governing Council in 2001: as expressed in a report by the Executive Director on the issue,¹⁷ the prevailing attitude was that as UNEP was an intergovernmental organization, the bulk of its funding should come from Governments.

35. During 2002–2006, efforts to raise funds from the private sector and other major groups focused primarily on stimulating the co-financing of priority projects, leaving the main role in funding to donor Governments. Earmarked pledges and contributions were generated from the United Nations

¹⁷ UNEP/GC.21/7/Add.1, annex.

Foundation through the mechanism of the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships (UNFIP). Remittances received from UNFIP in support of UNEP programme activities in 2002–2003 totalled approximately \$12.67 million and in 2004–2005 amounted to \$12.31 million. In total, during the period 2000–2005, expenditures on UNEP programme activities funded through UNFIP exceeded \$42 million. Additional earmarked contributions were generated from various national and international private-sector companies and other major groups, more than 100 of which were contributing annually, including through in-kind contributions in support of UNEP priority initiatives.

VI. Issues concerning multilateral environmental agreements

36. As requested by the Governing Council in decision 23/1, the Executive Director has continued to focus on activities aimed at improving coordination between and the effectiveness of multilateral environmental agreements, taking into account the autonomous decision-making authority of the conferences of the parties to those agreements. Furthermore, in accordance with that decision, the Executive Director has intensified efforts to support implementation and enforcement of such agreements by Parties that are developing countries and countries with economies in transition, including through legal and technical assistance, advisory services and related training activities. UNEP also continues to be active in promoting synergies and interlinkages among multilateral environmental agreement. The Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law for the First Decade of the Twenty-first Century (Montevideo Programme III) has remained the strategic guidance under which UNEP addresses programmatic issues concerning these areas.

37. UNEP activities to support effective implementation of, compliance with and enforcement of multilateral environmental agreements are particularly designed to address the widespread inadequacies in national legislation and regulatory frameworks to implement those agreements and the lack of appropriate or inadequate national institutional arrangements and resources to enforce them. UNEP has been facilitating a consultative process, including two meetings of senior experts held in January and June 2006, respectively, in which stakeholders consider possible steps for improving compliance with and enforcement of multilateral environmental agreements through the elaboration of potential legal, structural and institutional innovations. UNEP will continue to facilitate such dialogue between stakeholders. It will also assist Governments to assess the impact that multilateral environmental agreements might have made since their adoption on efforts to reduce environmental degradation and, based on such assessment, provide demand-driven assistance to Governments in their implementation of multilateral environmental agreements. Additional information may be found in document UNEP/GC/24/INF/23.

38. With a view to supporting efforts at various levels to enhance compliance with and enforcement of multilateral environmental agreements, UNEP continues to disseminate the Guidelines on Compliance with and Enforcement of Multilateral Environmental Agreements adopted by the Governing Council in its decision SS VII/4 of 15 February 2002. Also, UNEP has published the *Manual on Compliance with and Enforcement of Multilateral Environmental Agreements*,¹⁸ which is a comprehensive commentary on the Guidelines. Access to environmental law information, including on multilateral environmental agreements, is available on the ECOLEX website, which is jointly operated by UNEP, the World Conservation Union and FAO. The Register of International Treaties and Other Agreements in the Field of the Environment,¹⁹ available on the UNEP website, presents information on over 270 international environment-related treaties.

39. UNEP has undertaken a number of capacity-building activities aimed at strengthening effective compliance with and implementation and enforcement of multilateral environmental agreements for specific groups of stakeholders, including parliamentarians, judicial officials and customs officials. The training was based on the clustering of specific thematic issues such as the enforcement of trade-, biodiversity- or chemicals and waste-related multilateral environmental agreements or the Rio conventions.

40. UNEP, including through the World Conservation Monitoring Centre, has undertaken a number of projects concerning biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals and

¹⁸ ISBN 92-807-2703-6.

¹⁹ UNEP/Env.Law/2005/3. Available at http://www.unep.org/DPDL/law/PDF/register_Int_treaties_contents.pdf.

the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, Especially as Waterfowl Habitat. A project on knowledge management, for example, aims to promote the strategic use of information and facilitate the interoperability of information datasets related to biodiversity-related conventions. The project is implemented through the development of an interoperable system of contact information for the focal points of the relevant conventions, a searchable list of Parties to each convention and a system that interconnects related elements of the strategic plans, decisions and resolutions of each convention. A project on harmonizing national reporting strives to assist Parties and various convention secretariats through the facilitation of a dialogue among the secretariats on the formulation of report formats, thematic reporting across conventions and pilot projects in developing countries on the harmonization of national reporting.

41. UNEP is also developing a project on issue-based modules to encourage and facilitate the coherent implementation of multilateral environmental agreements at the national level. The modules focus on key biodiversity issues, namely inland waters, invasive alien species, climate change and sustainable use, and provide all actors involved in implementation of different multilateral environmental agreements with structured information on common issues across different multilateral environmental agreements.

42. Recognizing the role of ecosystem services in sustainable development, UNEP plays a key role in identifying approaches that could demonstrate how these services can be used effectively to advance the objectives of multilateral environmental agreements. Relevant activities focus on normative work (e.g., pilot projects to identify pro-poor markets for ecosystem services, a valuation project in the Lake Victoria region aimed at assessing the value of various ecosystem services and a project to identify the links between ecosystem services and natural capital), capacity-building (e.g., training workshops on payments for ecosystem services), and partnership building (e.g., facilitation of networking among policy makers and experts).

43. Further, UNEP has promoted communication, education and public awareness activities in support of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. That has included assisting 15 countries in launching and implementing national climate awareness programmes; providing outreach services to civil society, including youth, mass media, businessmen and decision makers; and compiling and disseminating graphic materials, fact sheets and simplified guides. Based on this experience, UNEP has started a project on awareness-raising for biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements with a view to enhancing the capacities of Parties to such agreements to fully implement their goals. Also, UNEP has continued to provide information support to multilateral environmental agreement secretariats in their efforts to achieve public outreach goals. UNEP activities in this area have included the development of public information materials and the provision of media assistance in connection with meetings taking place under the auspices of such agreements.

44. In preparation for the publication of the fourth Global Environment Outlook report (GEO-4), UNEP has been working to integrate multilateral environmental agreements into the environmental assessment process in order to identify synergies and enhance the impact of GEO-4 on national and international policy making. UNEP has received contributions from multilateral environmental agreements towards the development of the GEO-4 report. UNEP will continue to work closely with the secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements on the GEO-4 production and review process until its completion and launching in September 2007.

45. Under the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building, UNEP will support, in close cooperation with the secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements and other relevant partners, in particular UNDP, the implementation of, compliance with and enforcement of multilateral environmental agreements at the national level, adopting a synergistic approach where relevant. This support will be based on strategic priorities identified by Governments and will complement the support provided by other international organizations and bilateral donors. Special attention will also be given to enhancing national capacity-building and technology support for the implementation of regional and subregional environmental agreements such as regional seas conventions.

46. UNEP continues to provide administrative support services to the multilateral environmental agreements for which the Executive Director provides secretariat functions and has made significant efforts further to improve the quality and timeliness of those services.

47. In 2006, there was an important development aiming at further enhancing synergies and improving cooperation and coordination among three chemicals- and wastes-related multilateral

environmental agreements, namely the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade and the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal. The conferences of the parties to the Stockholm and Rotterdam Conventions, at their second and third meetings, held in May and October 2006, respectively, as well as the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention at its eighth meeting, held in late November 2006, agreed to address this matter and to establish an ad hoc joint working group consisting of selected Parties to the respective conventions.

VII. Enhanced coordination across the United Nations system, including the Environment Management Group

48. An assessment of the need for, and complexity involved in, environmental coordination formed the backdrop for the original rationale for establishing the United Nations Environment Management Group in 1999, with the endorsement of the General Assembly in its resolution 53/242, which set out a number of the Group's core functions and clearly illustrated that the Group was intended to serve as a mechanism that would first and foremost assist its member organizations to achieve a more rational and cost-effective division of labour with respect to their growing and often overlapping environmental functions and objectives. It was hoped that the Group would bring about improved inter-agency policy coherence and collaboration and adopt a problem-solving, results-oriented approach that would enable United Nations bodies, secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements, the Global Environment Facility and partners, including financial institutions, to share information, consult on proposed new initiatives, contribute to a planning framework, develop agreed priorities and delineate their respective roles in the implementation of those priorities in order to achieve a more rational and cost-effective use of their resources. The most important goals of the Environment Management Group are to achieve effective coordination and joint action in dealing with key environment and human settlements issues and to assist intergovernmental bodies in the areas of environment and human settlements, in particular the Governing Council of UNEP and the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), in preparing coordinated inputs to intergovernmental forums, notably the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development.

49. Since the twenty-third session of the Council/Forum, the Executive Director has undertaken further measures to strengthen the functioning of the Environment Management Group. Those measures include three main lines of action: first, consultations with the Environment Management Group, including the convening by the Executive Director, serving as the Chair of the Group, of an Environment Management Group High-level forum in Geneva on 24 January 2006; second, consultations with Member States of the United Nations at the Environment Management Group Partnership Forum held in Curitiba, Brazil, in April 2006; and third, consultations by members of the Environment Management Group in the context of the ongoing United Nations reform initiatives, including General Assembly informal consultations in response to paragraph 169 of the World Summit Outcome and consultations of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment.

50. The executive heads of United Nations agencies and the secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements responded positively to the invitation by the Executive Director and actively participated in the preparations for and deliberations at the first meeting of the High-level Forum of the United Nations Environment Management Group in Geneva in January 2006. The meeting was well attended and the discussions were forward-looking, interactive and productive. As an immediate follow-up action and to demonstrate that the Environment Management Group is a system-wide mechanism, the Assistant Director-General for Natural Sciences of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) gave a presentation describing the main outcomes of the meeting to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its ninth special session, where the extensive efforts undertaken to reinvigorate the Environment Management Group were acknowledged as a practical response to the 2005 World Summit Outcome.

51. The Executive Director took several other follow-up actions in his capacity as Chair of the Environment Management Group. First, he sent a letter to the Secretary-General regarding the Group's commitment to supporting and contributing to the initiatives under way to reform the United Nations and in particular the United Nations High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment.

52. The Executive Director's next follow-up action in his capacity as Chair of the Environment Management Group was to convene the first meeting of the Ad-hoc Technical Working Group on an Information Exchange System, which took place in Nairobi on 12 and 13 March 2006, during which it was noted that a committee on information exchange systems would be formally established in the near future. The meeting participants discussed some of the issues outlined in the recent report of the Secretary-General entitled "Investing in the United Nations: for a stronger Organization worldwide", in which the Secretary-General noted that the reform proposals set out in the report could not be implemented without appropriate information and communications technology. The Ad-hoc Working Group considered options for developing an effective system of information exchange that would allow the Group's members to provide information, in a systematic manner, on complementarities between analytical and normative activities within the United Nations system. Such a system of information exchange would provide a medium through which the views and opinions of the members could be gathered and collated in a cost-effective manner. The report of the Ad hoc Technical Working Group on an Information Exchange System was presented at the first meeting of the Environment Management Group Partnership Forum, which is discussed below and at which the participants considered and discussed proposals on information exchange, communication and networking.

53. The Executive Director's next follow-up action in his capacity as the Chair of the Environment Management Group was to invite other United Nations bodies, funds, programmes and agencies, the secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements and representatives of member States to take part in a round-table discussion at the first meeting of the Partnership Forum of the Environment Management Group, which took place on 26 March 2006 in the margins of the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, in Curitiba, Brazil. The Forum was co-hosted by the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, demonstrating that the secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements are actively participating in the process of reinvigorating the Environment Management Group.

54. The first Partnership Forum marked the initiation of a process intended to lead to systematic dialogue with Governments. Since it is the Member States of the United Nations that ultimately decide on policies and priorities, establish programmes and allocate budgets, a series of partnership forums will enable representatives of developed and developing countries, as well as key agencies, to exchange views on priorities and explore opportunities for transforming the Environment Management Group into an effective mechanism capable of fully meeting the expectations embodied in General Assembly resolution 53/242 and other relevant resolutions relating to system-wide coordination and coherence. One of the themes of the roundtable discussion was the recognition that renewed inter-agency commitment to achieve greater system-wide coherence and coordination on environment and human settlements issues through a revitalized Environment Management Group will succeed only if made in consultation and concert with United Nations Member States. The main aim of the Partnership Forum, therefore, was to initiate necessary dialogue between the Group's members and key representatives of Member States so that the new initiatives of the Environment Management Group better reflect their priority issues and concerns and also support the larger reform goals and efforts of the United Nations.

55. Other themes of the roundtable discussion included improving system-wide coherence within the United Nations; investing in system-wide coherence and partnerships in support of inter-agency initiatives demonstrating the potential for and benefits of system-wide coherence, for example, the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building; achieving internationally-agreed targets through system-wide cooperation and concerted international efforts; and improving system-wide coherence and effectiveness, with particular reference to how the Environment Management Group could best facilitate and improve information exchange, communication, networking and cooperation on environmental trends.

56. The Executive Director's next follow-up action in his capacity as the Chair of the Environment Management Group was to present an issues note to the Environment Management Group Forum on the United Nations Reform Initiatives, which was held in Geneva on 3 and 4 July 2006. The note was intended to help focus and stimulate debate on key issues and questions which need to be addressed in the United Nations system-wide reform efforts in the field of environment. It included and expanded on key issues and questions raised in an earlier issues note²⁰ circulated by the United Nations Secretary-General's High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment in connection with an "Environment Consultation" held by that Panel in Nairobi on 5 May 2006.

²⁰ Available at <http://www.un.org/events/panel/resources/pdfs/Discussion%20Paper1.pdf>.

57. The United Nations reform process has accorded a great deal of attention to the environment. At the 2005 World Summit, global leaders agreed on the need for renewed United Nations reform efforts to achieve greater system-wide coherence across the various United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. They specifically asked the Secretary-General to strengthen the management and coordination of United Nations operational activities, giving priority to maximizing the United Nations' contribution to achieving internationally agreed development goals such as those set out in the Millennium Declaration²¹ and to improving United Nations effectiveness, coherence and performance in the three key areas of development, environment and humanitarian assistance.

58. In the issues note prepared for the environment consultations in the context of the United Nations reform initiatives, the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence highlighted the need for better integration of the environment perspective within the broad principle of sustainable development in United Nations country-level activities. As reflected in that issues note, key questions include the following: What is the best way to manage environment in United Nations system country operations? How can linkages between normative and operational activities within the United Nations be strengthened? How can the role of the United Nations resident coordinators and the participation of non-resident agencies be enhanced? What are the challenges and constraints regarding the mainstreaming of environment in development decision-making? With regard to strengthening the United Nations institutional framework on environment, the issues note stated that "the current system is characterized by fragmentation and a lack of coherence, including between the normative and operational aspects, hampering effectiveness and efficiency."

59. At the Environment Management Group High Level Forum on the United Nations Reform Initiatives, it was agreed that a stock-taking exercise should be undertaken aimed at generating a comprehensive overview of collaborative initiatives and actions of the organizations of the United Nations system in the area of the environment at the global, regional and national levels. The Executive Director, serving as the Chair of the Environment Management Group, summarized the essence of the conclusions and recommendations of the Forum regarding the purpose and parameters of the stocktaking exercise, as follows: (a) A stocktaking exercise was needed to identify the core activities and areas of Environment Management Group members and to identify the key areas in which agencies and organizations were working; (b) the exercise should also identify topics which interface with the environmental agenda; (c) the Environment Management Group should ensure that its work contributed to adding value to the work of each agency or organization; (d) a conceptual framework for working in a more proactive manner together was needed; (e) the Environment Management Group should ensure that what it did was relevant at both the global, regional and country levels; (f) the Environment Management Group could add value by focusing on major current and emerging issues; (g) the members of the Environment Management Group, with the assistance of the secretariat, should generate a menu of options outlining the issues on which the Environment Management Group wanted to focus, particularly those issues where the greatest number of Environment Management Group members had a key interest and where there was need for further attention.²²

60. As a follow-up, the Chair established a task force consisting of the representatives of UNDP, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, the World Meteorological Organization, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, Especially as Waterfowl Habitat, to oversee the exercise which is currently under way. The report of the task force will provide the basis for a full meeting of the Environment Management Group in the second half of 2007.

61. Another follow-up action of the Executive Director in his capacity as Chair of the Environment Management Group has been to maintain contacts with the members of the United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination with a view to securing their commitment in support of the Environment Management Group. To be effective, the overall United Nations reform efforts to achieve greater policy coherence and operational effectiveness in the United Nations system need to be initiated and driven from the top, both politically by the United Nations Member States through the General Assembly and managerially by the executive heads of all relevant United Nations bodies and agencies through the Chief Executives Board.

²¹ General Assembly resolution 55/2 of 8 September 2000.

²² See the report of the Forum, which is available at <http://www.unemg.org>.

62. Regarding the General Assembly informal consultative process in follow up to paragraph 169 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome, the Co-Chairs' summary of the General Assembly's Informal Consultative Process on the Institutional Framework for the United Nations' Environmental Activities issued on 27 June 2006 referred to the views expressed by many delegations that the Environment Management Group had not yet reached its full potential, that it could be better utilized in the inter-agency context and that its role should be strengthened in order to provide coherent environmental input across the United Nations system. It was also suggested that the relationship between the Environment Management Group and the United Nations Development Group should be strengthened in order to provide a stronger link between normative and analytical work and operational activities. The report also highlighted that a number of delegations had called for the strengthening of the Environment Management Group and had said that the Group should improve coordination not just among its members but also with other inter-agency mechanisms such as the United Nations Development Group and that it could provide a vehicle for coordination and information exchange on normative aspects and on scientific knowledge across the system.

63. The report of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment contains a number of recommendations of relevance to the Environment Management Group. Among other things, it recommends that United Nations agencies, programmes and funds with responsibilities in the area of the environment cooperate more effectively on a thematic basis and through partnerships with a dedicated agency at the centre; that there be greater coordination at headquarters to promote coherence at the country level; and that greater coordination efforts at the country level be undertaken to promote coherence at the international level. There is a need to strengthen UNEP coordination of system-wide environmental policies in order to improve cohesion and consistency. In that regard, the Environment Management Group should be given a clearer mandate and should be better utilized. It should be linked with the broader framework of sustainable development coordination. The developments outlined in the present report should be taken into account in determining the future direction of the work of the Environment Management Group.

64. In addition to the above, in the context of preparations for the 2006–2007 cycle of the Commission on Sustainable Development's multi-year programme of work and in preparation for the fourteenth session of the Commission, in May 2006, the Environment Management Group was invited to report on cooperative United Nations activities related to the issues of atmosphere and air pollution as well as industrial development. The aim was to provide a broad review of the experiences, lessons learned and best practices of United Nations agencies and multilateral environmental agreements on specific environmental aspects of the above issues that might be replicated by other programmes and agencies as well as Governments. Consequently, Environment Management Group members prepared two separate reports on environmental aspects of those issues. An issue management group was established for each report. The issue management group for atmosphere and air pollution was chaired by the World Meteorological Organization and included representatives from the International Atomic Energy Agency, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, UNEP, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, the World Health Organization, the secretariat of the Basel Convention and the World Bank. The issue management group on industrial development was chaired by UNIDO and included representatives from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, UNDP, the Basel Convention secretariat and UNEP. Furthermore, to contribute to a collaborative exercise between the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and UNEP, and in implementing the Secretary General's Policy Committee decision on climate change, which includes provisions on adopting specific initiatives on greenhouse gas mitigation within the United Nations system, the Environment Management Group is considering a proposal of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to undertake a feasibility study on making the United Nations "carbon-neutral", which would include the preparation of an inventory for the consideration of the Commission on Sustainable Development at its fifteenth session, in April and May 2007.

Annex

Draft Environment Watch Strategy: Vision 2020

A. Vision 2020

The strategy is designed to pursue the following vision:

Enhanced institutional, scientific and technological infrastructures and capacities for cooperation in keeping the state of the environment under review and providing timely, accurate, credible, relevant and consistent environmental data and information for environmental governance .

B. Expected results and benefits

The strategy is expected to generate the following results and benefits:

- (a) Enhanced national and international institutional, scientific and technological capacities for keeping the environment under review through sharing of advice, tools, processes, expertise and experience in the area of data collection and management and in the production and dissemination of relevant information and assessments;
- (b) Identification of international priority flows of data and information to be collected and reported once by countries in concerted efforts across the world and to be used on repeated occasions, including for the preparation of a core set of environmental indicators and for United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) reports and assessments;
- (c) Improved availability, timeliness, accuracy, credibility, relevance and consistency of environmental data, information, reports, alerts and early warnings at national and international level;
- (d) Improved access to and exchange of environmental data and information at reduced transaction costs for the purposes of national reporting; natural resource accounting, including the value of ecosystem services; decision-making relating to the mitigation of and adaptation to environmental change; mainstreaming of environmental considerations into development activities for the enhancement of human well-being; poverty reduction; tackling post-conflict and disaster situations; implementing multilateral environmental agreements and attaining national and international development goals.

C. Strategic objectives

The strategy is designed to pursue the following three overarching objectives.

1. To build national institutional and technological capacity in developing countries and countries with economies in transition for collecting, managing, analysing and disseminating environmental data and information for decision making

The strategic objective would be achieved through the following undertakings:

- (a) Developing a web-based learning platform to keep the environment under review, to be ready in prototype form by 2008 and fully operational by 2010;
- (b) Supporting upon request the enhancement of national environmental information infrastructures and capacities, including through the establishment of a focal point and a web-based national environmental information node for a network of institutions and experts with capacities in environmental science, monitoring and assessments in 45 countries by 2012 and 100 countries by 2018;
- (c) Supporting the participation of experts in international environmental networks and assessments administered by UNEP, including through fellowships, aiming to ensuring a geographically balanced representation in such processes by 2020.

2. To connect national, international, scientific and technical capacities and efforts to keep the state of environment under review and to promote the exchange of priority environmental data and information

The strategic objective would be achieved through the following undertakings:

- (a) Developing a web-based information platform of complementary, up-to-date, coherent and quality-assured priority data and information, indicators and early-warning and alert services, to be ready in prototype form by 2008 and fully operational by 2012;
- (b) Incrementally enhancing regional environmental information networks comprising nodes and focal points of national environmental information networks and networks of thematic and functional

institutions and experts, to be ready in pilot form in all United Nations regions by 2010 and fully operational in all United Nations regions by 2019;

- (c) Incrementally developing a worldwide environmental information network comprising nodes and focal points of regional, thematic and, as appropriate, national environmental information networks and partner institutions, to be ready in pilot form by 2010 and fully operational by 2020.

3. To enhance the interaction between scientists and decision-makers through timely, credible, legitimate and relevant assessments of the state of and outlook for the environment

The strategic objective would be achieved through the following undertakings:

- (a) Developing a web-based assessment platform which will provide an overview of the thematic and geographic coverage and scope of environmental assessments as a basis for the prioritization of future assessment needs, to be ready in prototype form by 2008 and fully operational by 2010;
- (b) Developing by 2009 a coherent environmental assessment approach which will codify different assessment methodologies, ranging from environmental impact assessments to international environmental assessments;
- (c) Establishing a structured worldwide environmental assessment partnership by 2010 for the conduct of mutually supportive cutting-edge assessment processes involving scientists, partners and decision-makers in response to needs identified by decision-makers.

D. Implementation

During implementation of the approved programme of work, the strategy will be further improved by the Executive Director of UNEP in close cooperation with Governments and a consortium of international organizations and financial institutions. Capacity-building and technology support to developing countries and countries with economies in transition will be provided by UNEP or a partner in the consortium, subject to the availability of funds.
