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**International environmental governance: implementation of  
decisions of the seventh special session of the Governing Council/  
Global Ministerial Environment Forum and the World Summit  
on sustainable development on the report of the Intergovernmental  
Group of Ministers of Their Representatives on International  
Environmental Governance**

## **Overview of progress on international environmental governance**

### **Report of the Executive Director**

#### **Addendum**

### **Elements for an intergovernmental strategic plan on technology support and capacity-building**

#### *Summary*

In its decision 22/17 I of 7 February 2003, the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum requested the Executive Director to develop a draft intergovernmental strategic plan on technology support and capacity-building, on the basis of inputs from States indicating their national or regional priorities, in collaboration with relevant organizations. In response to that decision, the Executive Director is circulating the present background paper, the purpose of which is to present relevant information and possible elements that may be taken into account by States for their further consideration with a view to forming the basis for the development of a draft intergovernmental strategic plan on technology support and capacity-building and the initiation of an intergovernmental process for that purpose.

\* UNEP/GCSS.VIII/1.

## I. Introduction

1. Following the establishment by the General Assembly<sup>1</sup> of the Global Ministerial Environment Forum of UNEP as a venue to review important and emerging policy issues in the field of the environment, at its inaugural session, the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum adopted the Malmö Ministerial Declaration,<sup>2</sup> which launched a number of important processes leading up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

2. In addition to reviewing the key environmental challenges of the twenty-first century, the Malmö Declaration set the stage for substantive debate in preparation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, laid the foundation for further strengthening of the institutional architecture for the environment and identified major constraints and discrepancies between commitment and action in implementation. In that regard, the Declaration stressed that goals and targets agreed by the international community must be implemented in a timely fashion. The Declaration reiterated that the mobilization of domestic and international resources, including development systems, would need to be realized far beyond current levels to ensure the success of the endeavour.

3. Subsequently, heads of State attending the World Summit on Sustainable Development emphasized that the trends in environmental degradation, of global proportions, should be halted and reversed. In that context the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development<sup>3</sup> included a series of goals and targets aimed at achieving those objectives and also placed specific focus on regional implementation. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation provided a benchmark for further efforts to build the capacity levels of developing countries and countries with economies in transition to enable them to meet the commitments made at the Johannesburg Summit.

4. It is evident that the capacity of countries to implement goals and commitments agreed upon by the international community remains unequal and inadequate. That limitation was recognized at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 (the Earth Summit) and was embodied in the Rio Principles<sup>4</sup> Subsequently the international community reconfirmed that challenge and, in the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development, stated:

“... we will work together to help one another gain access to financial resources, benefit from the opening of markets, ensure capacity-building, use modern technology to bring about development and make sure that there is technology transfer, human resource development, education and training to banish underdevelopment forever.”

5. While political will is an essential prerequisite for action to close the gap between commitment and implementation, further efforts are required to meet the capacity-building and technology needs of developing countries and countries with economies in transition. Such measures are essential to allow those countries to deal with complex environmental challenges, take part meaningfully in negotiations for international agreements, meet their commitments under such agreements and undertake practical implementation measures.

6. The international environmental governance process that took place in 2001–2002 reviewed the work of United Nations bodies and agencies, including UNEP, to address needs for capacity-building and technology support in the field of the environment. The international environmental governance process found that such activities had often been undertaken on a project-by-project approach, or on an ad hoc or

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<sup>1</sup> General Assembly resolution 53/242 of 28 July 1999.

<sup>2</sup> Governing Council decision SS.VI/1, annex.

<sup>3</sup> *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.I and corrigendum) chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

<sup>4</sup> See Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3–14 June 1992* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: *Resolutions adopted by the Conference*, resolution I, annex I.

sectoral basis, indicating that a strategic approach to capacity development has been lacking since the 1992 Earth Summit. The international environmental governance process also highlighted the lack of coherence and integrated approaches, particularly regarding capacity-building efforts undertaken by a wide variety of multilateral environmental agreements, especially at regional and subregional levels. In that regard, it is noteworthy that approximately 70 per cent of the multilateral agreements concluded over the past 30 years are regional or subregional in scope. Most have links to global agreements and provide the regional frameworks through which the global agreements can be implemented in the contexts of geographical or ecological regions or subregions.

7. A more coherent, internationally coordinated approach, whether at the regional or subregional level, needs to be formulated in order to transform the demand existing in developing countries for enhanced capacity into a set of strategic priorities and approaches that focus on the required financial and technical linkages and assistance in a more strategic manner.

8. One of the key outcomes of the international environmental governance process was the clear identification of the need to develop an intergovernmental strategic plan on technology support and capacity-building. As mandated by the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum in decision GCSS.VII/1 of 15 February 2002, adopted at its seventh special session, in Cartagena, Colombia, and as re-emphasized at its twenty-second session, in decision 22/17 I of July 1999, the plan will be developed under the auspices of UNEP on the basis of inputs from States and in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and other relevant organizations.

9. The present document reviews the evolving mandate of UNEP in this field, provides a brief overview of background information related to the work of UNEP, and proposes a possible framework and elements that could be included in the development of an intergovernmental strategic plan. Given the importance of the intergovernmental nature of such a plan it is also proposed that, at its current special session, the Council/Forum initiate an intergovernmental process to culminate in the adoption of the strategic plan at its twenty-third regular session.

## II. Evolving mandate of UNEP in technology support and capacity-building

10. Since its inception, UNEP has had an important mandate to assist the international community to develop institutions and capacity to meet internationally agreed objectives.

11. The founding resolution of the General Assembly, 2997 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972, provides the broad outline for the Programme's involvement in building the capacity of developing countries, where it states in its preamble: "*Conscious* of the need for processes within the United Nations system which would effectively assist developing countries to implement environmental policies and programmes that are compatible with their development plans and to participate meaningfully in international environmental programmes" and "*Convinced that*, in order to be effective, international cooperation in the field of the environment requires additional financial and technical resources". In paragraph 1 (f) of that resolution, the Assembly accords the Governing Council the function and responsibility "to maintain under continuing review the impact of national and international environmental policies and measures on developing countries, as well as the problem of additional costs that may be incurred by developing countries in the implementation of environmental programmes and projects, and to ensure that such programmes and projects shall be compatible with the development plans and priorities of those countries".

12. In paragraph 1 of its resolution 3436 (XXX) of 9 December 1975, the General Assembly "*Requests* the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to take such measures as may be necessary for the realization of the objectives and the implementation of the strategies relating to the programme of the United Nations Environment Programme in the field of national and international environmental law and, in particular, to take measures designed to provide technical assistance to developing countries, at their request, for the development of their national environmental legislation". In paragraph 4, it "*Requests* the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to assist States, upon request, in preparing proposals for legislative or other measures necessary for their adherence to conventions in the field of environmental management".

13. Chapter 38 of Agenda 21 states that priority areas on which UNEP should concentrate include “Facilitation of information exchange on environmentally sound technologies, including legal aspects, and provision of training” (paragraph 38.22 J); “Provision of technical, legal and institutional advice to governments, upon request, in establishing and enhancing their national legal and institutional frameworks, in particular, in cooperation with UNDP capacity-building efforts” (paragraph 38.22 I); and “Support to Governments, upon request, and development agencies and organs in the integration of environmental aspects into their development policies and programmes, in particular through provision of environmental, technical and policy advice during programme formulation and implementation” (paragraph 38.22 m).

14. In paragraph 38.23, Agenda 21 states that, “in order to perform all these functions, while retaining its role as the principal body within the United Nations system in the field of the environment and taking into account the development aspects of environmental questions, UNEP would require access to greater expertise and provision of adequate financial resources and it would require closer cooperation and collaboration with development organs and other relevant organs of the United Nations system. Furthermore, the regional offices of UNEP should be strengthened without weakening its headquarters in Nairobi, and UNEP should take steps to reinforce and intensify its liaison and interaction with UNDP and the World Bank.”

15. On 7 February 1997, in preparation for the five-year review of the Earth Summit, the UNEP Governing Council adopted the Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme. In paragraph 3, the Declaration states:

“The core elements of the focused mandate of the revitalized United Nations Environment Programme should be the following:

“(a) To analyse the state of the global environment and assess global and regional environmental trends, provide policy advice, early warning information on environmental threats, and to catalyse and promote international cooperation and action, based on the best scientific and technical capabilities available;

“(b) To further the development of its international environmental law aiming at sustainable development, including the development of coherent inter-linkages among existing international environmental conventions;

“(c) To advance the implementation of agreed international norms and policies, to monitor and foster compliance with environmental principles and international agreements and stimulate cooperative action to respond to emerging environmental challenges;

“(d) To strengthen its role in the coordination of environmental activities in the United Nations system in the field of the environment, as well as its role as an implementing agency of the Global Environment Facility, based on its comparative advantage and scientific and technical expertise.”

16. In 1997, the General Assembly endorsed the Nairobi Declaration during its five year review of the implementation of Agenda 21, and subsequently, in paragraph 5 of resolution 53/187 of 15 December 1998 emphasized “that the United Nations Environment Programme has been and must continue to be the principal United Nations body in the field of environment and that its role is to be the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, that promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system and that serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment”.

17. Furthermore, by paragraph 7 of its resolution 53/242 of 28 July 1999, the General Assembly supported “the proposals for the facilitation of and support for enhancing linkages and coordination within and among environmental and environment-related conventions, including by the United Nations Environment Programme, with full respect for the status of the respective convention secretariats and the autonomous decision-making prerogatives of the conferences of the parties to the conventions concerned, and emphasizes in this regard the need to provide the United Nations Environment Programme with adequate resources to perform this task”, while, in paragraph 11, it stressed “the need to ensure that capacity-building and technical assistance, in particular with respect to institutional strengthening in

developing countries, as well as research and scientific studies in the field of environment and human settlements, must remain important components of the work programmes of both the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), within their existing mandates, and also stresses, in this regard, the need for adequate financial resources as well as the need to avoid duplication of efforts”.

18. In paragraph 6 of resolution 54/216, adopted on 22 December 1999, the General Assembly “*Encourages* the supporting role of the United Nations Environment Programme for developing countries, particularly in Africa, through the development of policy support and capacity-building for international environmental negotiation, inter alia, through the revitalization of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment”.

19. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, adopted by the World Summit on Sustainable Development on 4 September 2002, places a strong focus on targeted goals relating to implementation and poverty eradication. In this regard, the Plan envisages that the United Nations system, through a coordinated approach, will build capacities in developing countries in order to meet sustainable development goals. In resolution 57/253 of 20 December 2002, in which it welcomes the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the General Assembly reaffirms also that “poverty eradication, changing unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, and protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development are overarching objectives of, and essential requirements for, sustainable development,” and, in paragraph 4, “Urges Governments and all relevant international and regional organizations, the Economic and Social Council, United Nations funds, programmes and regional economic commissions, specialized agencies, international financial institutions, the Global Environment Facility, as well as other intergovernmental organizations and major groups, to take timely actions to ensure the effective implementation of and follow-up to the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation”.

### **III. Emerging and evolving needs in technology support and capacity-building**

20. Since 1972, considerable progress has been made in developing countries, often with the support of UNEP, to establish national institutions and to enhance legal frameworks and technical capacity to address environmental issues. Indicative examples of recent activities of UNEP in this field are listed in the annex to the present report.

21. It is increasingly evident, however, that capacity-building and technology support for environment and sustainable development require a far more strategic approach supported by financial mechanisms and well coordinated among intergovernmental organizations, given the developments in the scientific understanding of complex environmental phenomena, the increased scale and severity of global environmental challenges and the integral relationship between environment and development.

22. The current undertaking to develop a strategic intergovernmental approach to capacity-building and technical support has been triggered by the outcome of the seventh special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, held in Cartagena, Colombia, in February 2002, at which Governments specifically called for targeted action by UNEP. Thus, in paragraph 34, the appendix to decision SS.VII/1 of that session states:

“In this regard, an intergovernmental strategic plan for technology support and capacity-building to developing countries should be developed to improve the effectiveness of capacity-building, and to address the gaps identified by assessments of existing activities and needs, including the ongoing GEF inventory, subject to the availability of funds other than the Environment Fund, taking into account that additional resources need to be made available for this purpose. Such a strategic plan could be implemented through enhanced coordination between UNEP and other relevant bodies, including GEF and UNDP. It could include an increased role for UNEP in country-level capacity delivery in particular through greater collaboration with UNDP.

“This could be built on the following two components:

“(a) Capacity-building and training: The strengthening of the national institutions responsible for environment and the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements which will promote the achievement of the objectives of the environmental component of sustainable development. Efforts by UNEP, in response to requests by Governments, to develop local and national capacity in environmental issues and for dissemination of best practices and experiences will build on its role as one of the three implementing agencies of GEF as well as on the expected benefits from the multi-year UNEP/GEF strategic partnership as envisaged in the UNEP/GEF Action Plan on Complementarity;

“(b) National-level coordination of environmental component of sustainable development: In addition to the mobilization of domestic resources, developing countries require access to financial, technological and technical resources from the international community, as well as better internal coordination to implement sustainable development strategies. Efforts for environmental improvement at all levels and the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements must converge for countries to achieve their national priorities and objectives. Countries are encouraged to promote the coordination of the multiple national frameworks that currently exist in the field of environment at the ministerial level”.

23. While the international community has moved forward in this regard, reaching agreement on commitments and targets at major conferences, or within the context of international conventions, to reverse the degradation of the environment at all levels, it is imperative to note that developing countries and countries with economies in transition need to be provided with assistance for developing adequate capacities and technological support to enable them to achieve such commitments and targets, bearing in mind the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. Without such assistance individual countries would not be able to meet the targeted actions and specific time-frames collectively decided upon by the international community and the existing gap between commitment and implementation would be perpetuated

24. It is also important to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in using the limited available financial and human resources through better coordination and more coherent implementation at all levels. The complexity of environmental challenges, closely linked with economic and social components of sustainable development, involve a variety of actors and activities, sometimes uncoordinated and duplicative. Efforts therefore need to be made to improve an integrated approach, so that optimum use of available resources may be ensured.

25. Given the specific circumstances of the different countries concerned, each country must be allowed to identify their own needs in capacity-building and technology support in order to meet their environmental priorities. As identified in chapter 34 of Agenda 21, entitled “Transfer of environmentally sound technology, cooperation and capacity-building”, environmentally sound technologies and the corresponding capacity-building needs encompass a broad range of issues, from which each country might identify elements suitable to its needs in achieving environmental objectives of sustainable development. The multilateral system should ensure practical arrangements geared towards transforming the needs of each country into a set of strategic priorities and the requisite assistance that would respond to it. Closer cooperation between UNEP, UNDP, GEF and, in particular, the multilateral environmental agreements would be essential in effectively meeting this challenge.

26. In this regard improved coordination with and among the multilateral environmental agreements, particularly in terms of enhancing synergies in issue-specific areas and national reporting mechanisms, as well as programmatic clustering for capacity-building initiatives, would facilitate UNEP capacity development activities and ensure the more effective use of financial resources. Similarly, increased communication would assist in leveraging limited human resources on matters of common interest, strengthen regional and country level activities and provide a platform for multilateral approaches and consistency in technology transfer.

27. Building on past experiences of GEF-UNDP capacity-building initiatives, a number of important points remain relevant and must be included in the strategic plan. These are:

(a) Efforts should be built on existing capacities;

- (b) There is a need for countries to prioritize their actions in implementing global conventions to which they are parties;
- (c) Importance must be given to national ownership, to ensure that built capacities are sustained;
- (d) Capacity-building programmes must be tailored to individual countries; and
- (e) Work must be coordinated and linked with efforts already in progress, and integrated with other sustainable development initiatives.

28. At the South Summit of the Group of 77, held in Havana in April 2000, the heads of State and Government of developing countries adopted the Havana Programme of Action, by which they addressed the challenges facing them in the twenty-first century. Focusing on the challenges of globalization, they committed themselves, among other things, to intensifying efforts at institutional capacity-building, including through the exchange of expertise, experiences, information and documentation between the institutions of the South, in order to develop human resources and strengthen the institutions of the South.<sup>5</sup> where knowledge and technology are concerned, they pointed out that today, more than ever, rapidly advancing scientific and technological developments had played a critical role in economic and social development and had, therefore, influenced all areas of human endeavour. As stated in their report, advances in technology also carried risks and uncertainties and even had potentially destructive implications, particularly in terms of their impact on the environment. More than ever, science and technology were also likely to exert a major influence on the way in which the earth's resources were used and shared among its inhabitants. Scientific knowledge was therefore emerging as a major source of power and influence and as a key factor in determining the sustainability of the planet and the future prospects of humankind. That challenge implied the need to elaborate an appropriate strategy designed to promote international cooperation in the field of science and technology.<sup>6</sup> The importance of South-South cooperation was underscored. Those outcomes of the South Summit of the Group of 77, as well as other relevant major conferences, such as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), need to be fully addressed in elaborating a strategic approach on capacity-building and technology support relating to the environmental dimension of sustainable development.

29. In addition, at the intergovernmental consultation on strengthening the scientific base of UNEP, held in Nairobi on 14 and 15 January 2004, the following capacity-building needs were identified:

- (a) Improvement of the national capacities in developing countries for data collection, analysis, monitoring and integrated environmental assessment;
- (b) Development of institutional capacities, staff training, the transfer of appropriate and adaptable technologies and methodologies;
- (c) Increase in the numbers of scientists able to understand policy-making processes, and provision of policy-relevant advice to decision-makers at the relevant levels;
- (d) Greater involvement of developing country scientists and research institutions in international environmental assessments;
- (e) Strengthened capacity for environmental research, data collection and analysis and, in this regard, strengthening of the assessment and monitoring capacities and expertise of UNEP. This could assist UNEP in the transfer of experience, knowledge, skills and practices;
- (f) Strengthened cooperation with and support to national, subregional and regional institutions, including through scientific exchanges and establishing environmental and inter-disciplinary information networks;

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<sup>5</sup> Chapter II, paragraph 12 (4).

<sup>6</sup> Chapter III, paragraphs 1 and 4.

(g) Strengthened cooperation with and support to regional bodies for the assessment and early warning of emerging environmental issues, particularly within the context of regional frameworks, such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) initiative and other regional and subregional initiatives;

(h) Strengthening of the regional and subregional presence of UNEP, where appropriate, for more effective and comprehensive assessments;

(i) Further strengthening of the scientific credibility of the Global Environment Outlook (GEO) process and other UNEP assessments and monitoring structures and extended collaboration in assessment activities to include collaborating centres at all levels, including those of developing countries and countries with economies in transition;

(j) Support for assessments of environmental issues of regional and subregional importance including through collaborating centres;

(k) Promotion of coherent partnership approaches to capacity-building and mobilization of resources for the development of methodologies, training, institutional training arrangements for assessment, monitoring and data collection, including the use of satellite information;

(l) Strengthened awareness of policy makers of the value of research for decision-making.

30. The intergovernmental consultation strongly endorsed the view that efforts by UNEP to build capacity in environmental research, monitoring and assessment are vitally important and need to be strengthened and expanded at national, subregional and regional levels.

31. All the above needs should inform current environmental institution-building activities and the development and promotion of environmental management instruments. These considerations should also underpin collaborative efforts with Governments, civil society and partners in the United Nations system.

#### **IV. Framework of the strategic plan**

32. The strategic plan should be complementary to and coordinated with activities and programmes being undertaken across the United Nations system as a whole, in particular through the United Nations Common Country Assessment/United Nations Development Assistance Framework and in close cooperation with UNDP, through the United Nations Resident Coordinator at the country level. The framework for the strategic plan should be developed on the basis of existing intergovernmental decisions and further elaborated in line with national or regional needs and priorities, including those identified at various intergovernmental forums already held at the regional and global levels.

33. The international environmental governance mandate conferred by the Governing Council at its seventh special session in Cartagena refers to the need to implement the strategic plan through enhanced coordination with, among other bodies, UNDP. It refers to an increased role for UNEP in country-level capacity delivery, particularly through greater collaboration with UNDP, and notes that there is a special relationship with UNDP building on its unique national field capacity, and that it can contribute to those efforts and facilitate the mobilization of additional resources. In pursuance of this mandate, UNEP and UNDP are currently engaged in an exercise to develop a new framework memorandum of understanding to enhance joint capacity-building activities for the development of a strategic plan. This exercise fully takes into account the need to develop clear operational modalities that avoid duplication and take account of the respective competencies of the two organizations.

34. UNEP should build upon GEF-financed activities aimed at achieving global environmental benefits in its six focal areas: biological diversity; climate change; international waters; ozone; land degradation; and persistent organic pollutants. This should be carried out in accordance with the UNEP/GEF action plan on complementarity, as endorsed by the UNEP Governing Council and the GEF Council.

35. Decision GCSS.VII/1, on international environmental governance, provided that the strategic plan should be developed to improve the effectiveness of capacity-building, and to address the gaps identified by assessments of existing activities and needs, including the current GEF inventory, subject to the availability of funds other than the Environment Fund, taking into account that additional resources need to be made available for this purpose. It also contained the following elements to guide the development of the strategic plan:

“(a) Capacity-building and training: The strengthening of the national institutions responsible for environment and the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements which will promote the achievement of the objectives of the environmental component of sustainable development. Efforts by UNEP, in response to requests by Governments, to develop local and national capacity in environmental issues and for dissemination of best practices and experiences will build on its role as one of the three implementing agencies of GEF as well as on the expected benefits from the multi-year UNEP/GEF strategic partnership as envisaged in the UNEP/GEF Action Plan on Complementarity;

“(b) National-level coordination of the environmental component of sustainable development: In addition to the mobilization of domestic resources, developing countries require access to financial, technological and technical resources from the international community, as well as better internal coordination to implement sustainable development strategies. Efforts for environmental improvement at all levels and the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements must converge for countries to achieve their national priorities and objectives. Countries are encouraged to promote the coordination of multiple national frameworks that currently exist in the field of environment at the ministerial level.”

## A. Functions

36. The following are generic functions that could be considered in the development of the strategic plan:

- (a) Continuous review of intergovernmental policy at global and regional levels to ensure that the strategic plan remains relevant and responds to emerging needs;
- (b) Assessment of weaknesses and gaps in current capacity-building and technology support activities;
- (c) Organization of or efforts to facilitate capacity-building and training activities, as well as national-level coordination, under the leadership of national Governments and according to national priorities, of the environmental component of sustainable development;
- (d) Provision of an agreed plan of effective and time-bound measures at international, regional and national levels;
- (e) Identification and provision of support for promoting the coordination of multiple national frameworks that currently exist in the field of the environment at the ministerial level, as well as the strengthening of national institutions, including the ministries of environment, in developing countries and countries with economies in transition;
- (f) Setting in place arrangements or efforts to facilitate such arrangements for access to, and transfer of, environmentally sound technologies, including steps for the transfer of publicly owned technology.

37. While actual needs will be identified on the basis of a substantive review of existing intergovernmental policy, the following sections present an indicative structure, on the basis of the experiences gained in activities of UNEP, in the field of capacity-building and technology support. The framework of the plan could be based on the components identified in the heading of each section.

## **B. Guiding principles**

38. Guiding principles for the Strategic Plan should contain both substantive policy guidance as well as operational and procedural principles. Policy guidance and direction would flow from the strategic review of existing intergovernmental policy specifically relevant to capacity-building and technology support.

39. With regard to the operational and procedural principles, recent intergovernmental agreements or instruments contain modalities that could serve to inform the design of the plan. Those might include, for instance, setting time-bound, specific targets, accountability, transparency in governance, participatory process in decision-making and clearly defined access criteria.

## **C. Possible elements of the future plan**

40. Elements of the intergovernmental strategic plan should contain clearly defined objectives on selected key issues, the corresponding strategies to address those objectives, and a set of strategic time-bound activities to implement those strategies.

41. Those objectives, strategies and activities should be identified through a bottom-up approach in order to reflect the actual needs of countries and regions. The relevant elements should be identified on the basis of inputs from Governments, as well as a review of priorities emerging from regional ministerial forums. The views of relevant organizations and stakeholders, both governmental and non-governmental, should be considered.

### **1. Global level**

42. A review of existing agreements approved at an intergovernmental level should underpin the development of a clear and prioritized global framework for the strategic plan, which is consistent with the specific mandate of UNEP and includes provision for a coordinated approach taking into account complementarities with other relevant intergovernmental organizations.

43. Activities to enhance technology support and capacity-building (for example, assessment and information networks, including the GEO process; supporting and promoting legal instruments; enhancing the coherence of the environmental governance; promoting synergies among the conventions) should be more effectively coordinated.

### **2. Regional level**

44. The strategic plan should respond to the regional dimensions emphasized in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. This approach could take into account the experience gained in assisting African countries to prepare and finalize the action plan on the environmental Initiative of NEPAD and supporting its implementation through capacity-building. This approach was based on the following four modalities:

- (a) Support for the implementation of global and regional environmental conventions and other legal instruments;
- (b) Training and enhancement of existing centres of excellence;
- (c) Promoting South-South cooperation;
- (d) Exchanges of best practices and lessons learned.

45. Regional arrangements need to be institutionalized in support of regional initiatives, such as NEPAD, the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) and the African Ministerial Conference on Water (AMCOW). Special attention needs to be given to strengthening the support given to regional environmental ministers' forums, to enable them to play a role in contributing to the development, implementation and review of the strategic plan.

### 3. National level

46. The strategic plan should assist in developing the UNEP response to national-level needs for capacity-building on issues of relevance to its mandate. UNEP activities should complement measures implemented by GEF and be coordinated with UNDP capacity-building activities, as outlined in Capacity 2015, the new capacity development initiative launched by UNDP. Capacity 2015 will orient and support a number of key capacity development initiatives, including developing capacities for local sustainable development, sustainable development strategies, local capacity development for multilateral environmental agreements and developing capacities to reduce vulnerability in small island developing States.<sup>7</sup>

## D. Institutional mechanism

47. Since, under its current functional and organizational set-up, UNEP capacity-building activities take place within the work programmes of separate UNEP divisions, there is a need to set in place a comprehensive database of capacity-building and technology support activities which could be further developed in line with the strategic approach. This may require further organizational readjustment in order to define a clear focal point for coordination within the organization.

48. The implementation of the framework should be guided by regional capacity-building action plans and could require support from regional mechanisms, building on existing institutions, both at the intergovernmental level and secretariat levels, such as AMCEN, AMCOW, the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE), and others. The institutional focal point within UNEP would ensure a coordinated approach to the development of programme activities and collaborative initiatives at global, regional and national levels.

### 1. Intergovernmental level

49. The Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum will regularly review and provide policy guidance for the plan, acting pursuant to its mandate to review the global environment and to promote international cooperation. The plan would become the implementation arm of the Council/Forum by connecting its global decision-making process to national decision-making processes and by enhancing implementation.

50. Flexible procedures should enable the UNEP secretariat to receive from Governments their national or regional priorities, and to determine modalities of assistance for the implementation and review of such implementation, taking into account changing priorities. Such adjustments would be brought to the attention of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum.

51. In order to ensure intergovernmental participation in the implementation of the strategic plan, an inter-sessional standing arrangement for consultation purposes could be established, such as a standing committee under the auspices of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum.

52. As another option, joint meetings of the bureaux of the Governing Council and the Committee of Permanent Representatives could serve in a guiding capacity for the implementation of the framework and the preparation and implementation of regional action plans. These joint meetings of the bureaux on technology support and capacity-building would take place at least once a year, and as often as required, preferably in the margins of major intergovernmental meetings organized by UNEP. Alternatively, consideration might be given to appointing a few Governments from each region to form a standing committee, although the selection of members to such a committee might entail political negotiations.

53. Yet another option might be to use existing regional ministerial forums, rather than to set up a formal committee. For broader inclusiveness such forums could include the regional representatives on the bureaux of the Governing Council and the Committee of Permanent Representatives and representatives of the relevant regional organizations.

54. The steering committee of NEPAD will continue, through AMCEN, to guide the implementation of the capacity-building project for the environmental action plan of NEPAD.

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<sup>7</sup> See <http://www.undp.org/capacity2015/index.html>.

## **2. Secretariat level**

55. UNEP will provide secretariat services to manage the operation of the plan. The capacity of the UNEP regional offices will need to be enhanced for the preparation and implementation of regional action plans and every effort will be made to promote inter-agency collaboration with the relevant regional organizations and UNDP. To this end a coordinating arrangement may be established, building on existing in-house capacity.

56. UNEP capacity at headquarters will need to be enhanced to ensure in-house coordination among the functional divisions, as well as to ensure further support for the Programme's role in the United Nations Development Group in providing environmental inputs in country-level activities, promoting the exchange of experiences between and among the regions and enhancing South-South cooperation;

57. Focal points will be designated by the respective headquarters and by the UNEP office in New York and the UNDP office in Nairobi.

## **E. Financial mechanism**

58. As envisaged in decision GCSS.VII/1 on international environmental governance, additional extrabudgetary financial resources to implement the plan should be secured, in addition to the Environment Fund. Consideration should be given to options for the modalities of managing such funds, through which contributions from countries would be received, managed efficiently and used on a prioritized basis. Based on the NEPAD experience the regional capacity-building action plans could identify their own sources of financing, on a project-by-basis basis. Alternatively, member States may wish to consider increasing their Environment Fund contributions and ensuring that activities to be implemented as part of the strategic plan are given the necessary visibility in the biennial UNEP programme of work.

59. As called for by decision GCSS.VII/1, a strategic partnership between UNEP and GEF will be suggested for adoption by the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its twenty-third session and the GEF Council at its twenty-fifth meeting, to be held in May 2005, building on the GEF strategy on capacity-building adopted by the November 2003 Council meeting as well as the strategic priorities of the third phase of GEF as endorsed by the GEF Council.

60. The UNEP work programme will include specific financial provisions on capacity-building to be agreed by the Governing Council in adopting the UNEP biennium budget. These may be augmented through additional resources raised during each budget cycle.

## **V. Conclusion**

61. The suggested framework and background information contained in this report is intended to provide a basis for a substantive debate by member States at this se current session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum on the basic principles in the development of an intergovernmental strategic plan for capacity-building and technology support. Member States may wish in the context of this debate to take steps to establish an inter-sessional process, possibly a working group of the Council/Forum, to give further consideration to the development of the strategic plan within an intergovernmental setting and supported by any necessary information and inputs to be provided by UNEP. This process could finalize a draft strategic plan for submission to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum for adoption at its twenty-third session.

## Annex

### Indicative examples of UNEP capacity-building and technology based activities

(a) Examples of technical assistance for capacity development:

- Providing data on assessment and early warning and other information and knowledge as a basis for decision-making or awareness-raising: examples include the Global Environment Outlook process, the ECOLEX database on environmental law, the legal files of the International Register of Potentially Toxic Chemicals (IRPTC) and chemicals-related data;
- Enhancing the environmentally sound management of natural resources and capacity-building in the field of chemicals, such as developing and providing technical and policy guidance materials, advisory services, workshops, and training;
- Harnessing the emerging experience of UNEP in capacity development for regional health and environment initiatives;
- Providing technical assistance and expert advisory services for developing and strengthening institutions and law, including bilateral or regional advisory services (such as the environmental law development programme in Africa), the global training programme on environmental law and policy, and capacity-building activities targeted at the judiciary. In this context the Partnership for the Development of Environmental Laws and Institutions in Africa (PADELIA) project, which started in 1994, provides an example of how legal and institutional national frameworks for the management of the environment and natural resources may be improved. The project has funding in excess of \$3 million and 13 African countries benefit directly from its activities;
- Assisting Governments in implementing global and regional environmental conventions and other agreements: such activities include assistance to Governments in enhancing the ability of their officials to participate more effectively in the negotiations of multilateral environmental agreements; the OzonAction Programme and the information clearing-house under the Montreal Protocol Multilateral Fund, which has provided national ozone units with over 100 individual guidebooks, manuals and other information materials and has set in place regional networks of ozone officers, with eight networks comprising 124 developing and 13 developed countries providing a platform for ozone officers from article 5 countries to exchange experiences, develop skills and tap expertise of peers; support for capacity-building in developing countries and countries with economies in transition in the implementation of the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants; assistance to parties to regional seas conventions and protocols;
- Coordinating capacity development activities through United Nations systemwide mechanisms, such as the United Nations Development Group, in order to avoid duplication and make use of the comparative advantages of other United Nations agencies, programmes and funds, especially those active at the field level. The PADELIA project, mentioned above, is for example being jointly implemented with UNDP, the World Bank, the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and donor Governments;
- Establishing regional and subregional forums, such as ministerial environmental conferences in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean;
- Providing regional implementation support, such as that provided under NEPAD for the African region. In this regard UNEP has, through AMCEN, assisted in the development of the environmental initiative of NEPAD. This process has involved resource mobilization and project implementation in such focal areas as desertification, invasive species, poverty and

environment, forests, wetlands, health and environment, coastal and marine environment and climate change. UNEP has also supported NEPAD through actions aimed at simplifying and harmonizing the planning, programming, reporting and disbursement procedures in the United Nations system. Future programme support to NEPAD will focus, among other things, on natural disaster and risk management, sustainable and safer cities, waste management, rural-urban linkages and protection of the marine environment;

- Assisting Governments in integrating environmental considerations into development plans and the economic sector, including trade-environment and poverty-environment linkages; by undertaking projects on an integrated assessment of trade policies and liberalization, or on the use and application of economic instruments to achieve environmental objectives; and by preparing reference manuals and guides on environmental impact assessment. As part of UNEP efforts to improve the effectiveness of capacity-building on trade, environment and development, a task force was established with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in 2001 and joint workshops with the World Trade Organization took place in 2002. The UNEP/UNCTAD collaborative activities are aimed at ensuring integrated assessments that take into account economic, social and environmental considerations in decision-making for sustainable development at the policy, planning and programme levels. This approach would assist, for example, in the improvement and development of longer term capacity-building programmes that ensure the use of environmentally sound technologies in policy design, consistency in information sharing among a broad range of decision makers and the advantages of developing regional cooperative frameworks that reduce unsustainable practices. UNEP has involved countries from Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia in these projects;
- Assisting Governments in collaboration with other organizations in the event of environmental emergencies by conducting environmental assessments or post-conflict assessments;
- Increasing the involvement and commitment of civil society organizations, the private sector and the scientific community;
- Running training programmes for government officials in the implementation of sustainable consumption policies;
- Enhancing the experience gained by UNEP in capacity-building activities in selected global environmental issues as an implementing agency of GEF;
- Increasing cooperation with UNDP, in particular at the national level, for example in the compilation of common country assessments and in project delivery and implementation.

(b) Examples related to technology and technology-related support:

- Promoting the experience gained by UNEP in facilitating the transfer of technology based on the sustainable development network of transfer of technology (SANET), under its strategic partnership with GEF;
- Establishment by the UNEP International Environmental Technology Centre (IETC) of an environmentally sustainable technologies initiative that addresses the current widespread lack of comprehensive and credible information on the performance of technologies. In this process UNEP is helping identify and develop, in coordination with Governments, the criteria, benchmarks and protocols that could support national and regional programmes set up to assess and verify the performance of such technologies;
- Promoting the Rural Energy Enterprise Development (REED) programme, which focuses on enterprise development and seed financing to enable entrepreneurs to plan, initiate and scale up their clean-energy businesses; and demonstrating innovative clean-energy businesses and business models that could be replicated within countries and across the region, as the strategy for technology transfer;

- Promoting solar and wind energy resource assessment, providing solar and wind resource data and geographic information assessment tools to public and private sector executives involved in energy market development;
  - Developing joint geophysical imaging methodology for geothermal reservoir assessment in East Africa;
  - Conducting capacity-building for national cleaner production centres; promoting cleaner production investment in developing countries; and building capacity for the integration of cleaner production and energy efficiency technologies;
  - Implementing sustainable construction projects designed to move the building and construction sector towards sustainable development;
  - Conducting phytotechnological projects designed to promote a better understanding of hydrological and biogeochemical processes within water basins;
  - Carrying out storm-water, wastewater and water demand management projects, focusing on urban water resources, with a view to developing a concerted strategy for the management of water resources in urban areas;
  - Implementing regional integrated waste management strategies as a framework for technology cooperation among countries in Asia and the Pacific, to raise awareness among Governments of the need for sustainable and integrated waste management policies;
  - Developing an environmentally sound technologies information system and innovative information and knowledge management system based on e-learning that improves the transfer of environmentally sound technologies.
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