



Decision 23/2

of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme



As adopted by the Twenty-third session of the Governing Council/
Global Ministerial Environment Forum (Nairobi, 21–25 February 2005)

Decision 23/2: Updated water policy and strategy of the United Nations Environment Programme

The Governing Council,

Recalling its decisions 21/11 of 9 February 2001 and 22/2 of 7 February 2003,

Recognizing the priorities outlined in Governing Council decisions and consistent with the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the internationally agreed goals of the Millennium Declaration¹ and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development² and the outcome of the twelfth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development³ and in anticipation of the thirteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, on water, sanitation and human settlements,

Recalling the commitment of Governments at the World Summit on Sustainable Development to develop integrated water resources management and water efficiency plans by 2005, with support to developing countries,⁴

Recalling in particular the commitments of Governments to reduce by half, by 2015, the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation and to achieve internationally agreed development goals related to the environment,

Bearing in mind principles 2, 3, 4, 7, 10 and 11 of the Rio Declaration,⁵

Having considered the report of the Executive Director on the United Nations Environment Programme water policy and strategy⁶ as requested by the Governing Council in its decision 22/2,

Expressing its appreciation to the Executive Director for the measures taken to implement Governing Council decision 22/2,

Taking note of the Ministerial Declaration adopted at the third World Water Forum on 23 March 2003,⁷

¹ General Assembly resolution 55/2.

² 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.

³ E/2004/29-E/CN.17/2004/21.

⁴ 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.

⁵ 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 1, annex I.

⁶ UNEP/GC.23/3/Add.5/Rev.1.

⁷ Final report of the third World Water Forum (March 2003).

Recalling the Jeju Initiative,⁸ which is a summary of the rich and interactive discussion on the part of the ministers attending the eighth special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, rather than a consensus view on all points,

1. Adopts the updated water policy and strategy of the United Nations Environment Programme⁹ as a general framework and guidance for the activities of the United Nations Environment Programme in the field of water and sanitation for the period 2005–2007, to be implemented with interested countries, upon their request;

2. Notes the concerns and reservations of Governments regarding the outstanding substantive and procedural issues in the development of the updated water policy and strategy;

3. Recommends that the Executive Director in his review takes into account areas of interest and concerns relating to, among other things, the following concepts included in the updated water policy and strategy:

- (a) Ecosystem approaches to integrated water resource management;
- (b) Emerging concepts;
- (c) Global assessment and monitoring;
- (d) Innovative instruments;
- (e) Participation and water governance;
- (f) Support to regional and subregional water bodies;
- (g) Groundwater;
- (h) Mention of the final report of the World Commission on Dams;¹⁰
- (i) Conceptual precision in the use of the terms “global waters”, “international waters” and “transboundary waters” applied to oceans, seas and inland bodies of water;

4. Requests the Executive Director to take the necessary effective measures to monitor the implementation of the water policy and strategy as updated;

5. Also requests the Executive Director to intensify collaborative activities with Governments, upon request, as well as with other organizations and agencies, in furtherance of the implementation of the water policy and strategy;

6. Further requests the Executive Director, in anticipation of the outcomes of the thirteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and the high-level meetings of the United Nations General Assembly to review implementation of the Millennium Declaration and other major relevant international meetings, in consultation with Governments, further to review the water policy and strategy to ensure that it contributes to the achievement of the internationally agreed goals contained in the Millennium Declaration¹¹ and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development;¹²

7. Requests that the draft updated water policy and strategy should be circulated by the ninth special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum in order that a final draft may be circulated no later than September 2006 for consideration by the Governing Council at its twenty-fourth session;

8. Also requests the Executive Director to circulate a report on the implementation and resource allocation of the water policy and strategy before the ninth special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum;

⁸ UNEP/GCSS.VIII/8, annex II.

⁹ UNEP/GC.23/3/Add.5/Rev.1/Add.1.

¹⁰ Final report of the World Commission on Dams, Dams and Development: A New Framework for Decision-making (November 2000).

¹¹ General Assembly resolution 55/2.

¹² 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.

9. Further requests the Executive Director, in collaboration with the Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and other agencies, to revise the Strategic Action Plan on Municipal Wastewater¹³ of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities, with a view to including the present work of the Global Programme of Action on urban sanitation, as well as rural sanitation, in order to address the environmental dimension of sanitation, and to include the Strategic Action Plan for consideration by the Governing Council in its review of the updated water policy and strategy at its twenty-fourth session;

10. Requests the Executive Director to facilitate the further development of the United Nations Environment Programme Global Environment Monitoring System on Water to ensure:

(a) Its continued role as a major global water quality assessment and monitoring programme;

(b) Its continued role as the repository for global water-quality data and its growing role in the development of water-quality indicators to support achievement of the water-related goals contained within the Millennium Declaration and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development;

(c) Its continued provision of inputs to the World Water Assessment Programme and the World Water Development Report;

11. Welcomes the generous offer of the Government of the People's Republic of China to host the second Intergovernmental Review Meeting of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities in 2006, which will serve as an important contribution to furthering implementation of the goals and targets associated with the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the Millennium Declaration, as well as to the review of oceans and seas, marine resources, small island developing States and disaster management and vulnerability scheduled to be undertaken by the Commission on Sustainable Development in 2014–2015;

12. Requests the Executive Director to proceed with organizing the second Intergovernmental Review Meeting of the Global Programme of Action, working to ensure as broad participation as possible, and to that end urges all Governments to be actively involved in the intergovernmental review process and, when possible, to make financial contributions to support the costs associated with that milestone event;

13. Also requests the Executive Director to ensure that the United Nations Environment Programme, when undertaking its activities related to the environmental aspects of water and sanitation, fully takes into account the work carried out by national Governments, international and regional organizations, multilateral environmental agreements and other United Nations agencies, so as to avoid duplication and to promote synergies, and takes into account the possibilities of the memorandum of understanding between the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Development Programme in that respect;

14. Further requests Governments in a position to do so, as well as intergovernmental bodies and international organizations, to respond positively to the resource-mobilization efforts of the Executive Director supporting the implementation of the activities provided for in the water policy and strategy in order to augment the budgetary support provided for in the relevant subprogrammes for the period 2005–2007;

15. Requests the Executive Director to provide the necessary support to developing countries and countries with economies in transition through the implementation by the United Nations Environment Programme of activities under the water policy and strategy within the context of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building;¹⁴

16. Also requests the Executive Director to report on the implementation of the present decision to the Governing Council at its twenty-fourth session.

¹³ UNEP/GPA/IGR.1/1.

¹⁴ UNEP/IEG/IGSP/3/4, annex.