



**Governing Council  
of the United Nations  
Environment Programme**

Distr.: General  
12 November 2008

Original: English



**Twenty-fifth session of the Governing Council/  
Global Ministerial Environment Forum**  
Nairobi, 16–20 February 2009  
Item 4 (c) of the provisional agenda\*

**Policy issues: international environmental governance**

**International environmental governance**

**Report by the Executive Director**

*Summary*

The present report summarizes actions taken or proposed on international environmental governance in implementation of United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Governing Council decision SS.VII/1 of 15 February 2002 on international environmental governance and decisions SS.VIII/1 of 31 March 2004 and 24/1 of 9 February 2007 on implementation of decision SS.VII/1 on international environmental governance. The following topics are discussed in the report:

- (a) Follow-up to paragraph 169 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome (General Assembly resolution 60/1);
- (b) 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.

\* UNEP/GC.25/1.

## I. Suggested action by the Governing Council

1. The Governing Council may wish to consider the adoption of a decision along the lines suggested below:

### 25/[...] **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 Programme<sup>1</sup> and the Malmö Ministerial Declaration,<sup>2</sup>

*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,<sup>3</sup> which emphasized the need for full implementation of decision SS.VII/1 of 15 February 2002,

*Recalling* the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building,<sup>4</sup> which it adopted by its decision 23/1 of 25 February 2005,

*Also recalling* its decision 24/1 of 9 February 2007,

*Further recalling* the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system,<sup>5</sup>

*Having considered* the reports of the Executive Director on international environmental governance,

## I

### **Follow-up to paragraph 169 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome**

1. *Notes* that the issues relating to international environmental governance are under consideration by the General Assembly at its sixty-third session, following the informal consultative process on the institutional framework for the United Nations' environmental activities;
2. *Notes also* that the General Assembly, in accordance with its resolution 61/205 of 20 December 2006, has decided to consider, if necessary, the issue of universal membership of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum of the United Nations Environment Programme at its sixty-fourth session, while noting the differences in views expressed so far on this important but complex issue;

## II

### **Strengthening the scientific base of the United Nations Environment Programme**

3. *Welcomes* the further consultative process on strengthening the scientific base of the United Nations Environment Programme as facilitated by the Executive Director and the valuable

---

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 UNEP/IEG/IGSP/3/4, annex.

5 General Assembly resolution 62/208 of 19 December 2007.

inputs made by Governments and other stakeholders that have resulted in a revised Environment Watch strategy;<sup>6</sup>

4. *Reaffirms* the need to strengthen the scientific base of the United Nations Environment Programme, within its mandate, including through the reinforcement of the scientific capacities of developing countries and countries with economies in transition in the area of the protection of the environment;

5. *Reaffirms also* that environmental early warning, assessment and monitoring of the state of the global environment are core functions of the United Nations Environment Programme and recognizes the importance of networks and partners that enable it to perform them;

6. *Underlines* the vital importance in a globalizing world of strengthening capacities to provide environmental information for policy setting and decision-making, including the integration of environment into development, meeting the obligations of multilateral environmental agreements and the achievement of national and international development goals, through the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan and what is termed as the “Delivering as one” approach;<sup>7</sup>

7. *Welcomes* the revised Environment Watch strategy together with the cost estimates, its full integration with the implementation of the medium-term strategy for the period 2010–2013 through the programmes of work and their alignment with the “Delivering as one” approach;

8. *Recognizes* that the important functions of the strategy are the following:

- (a) Capacity-building and technology support;
- (b) Assessment;
- (c) Early warning, monitoring and observation;
- (d) Development of environmental indicators, data support and information-sharing;
- (e) Networking and partnerships.

9. *Requests* the Executive Director to ensure that the components of the Environment Watch strategy are integrated, as appropriate, into the implementation activities of the medium-term strategy for the period 2010–2013 through the programmes of work;

10. *Calls upon* countries, partners, donors and financial institutions to contribute financial resources to meet the additional cost of implementing the strategy at the national level in the framework of the “Delivering as one” approach;

### III

#### **Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building**

11. *Notes with satisfaction* the strong and renewed emphasis included in the medium-term strategy for the period 2010–2013 on UNEP significantly enhancing its capacity to deliver on the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building and that implementation of the Plan has become an integral part of the implementation of the approved programmes of work of the United Nations Environment Programme;

### IV

#### **Strengthening the financing of the United Nations Environment Programme**

12. *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);

13. *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

---

6 UNEP/GC.25/INF/20.

7 Delivering as one: report of the Secretary General’s High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence in the areas of development, humanitarian assistance and the environment (A/61/583).

capacity and functions and for the effective coordination of the environmental component of sustainable development;

14. *Encourages* Governments, to the extent feasible and noting the strategic, prioritized, and results-based direction taken through the medium-term strategy, 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 programme of work and priorities of the United Nations Environment Programme;

15. *Requests* the Executive Director, in accordance with paragraph 19 of the appendix to decision SS.VII/1, to notify all States Members of the United Nations of the voluntary indicative scale of contributions that he intends to propose for the biennium 2010–2011 and urges each State Member to inform the Executive Director whether it will use the proposed voluntary indicative scale of contributions;

16. *Encourages* Governments, taking into account their economic and social circumstances, to make their voluntary contributions to the Environment Fund in 2010–2011 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;

17. *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

18. *Takes note* of the activities undertaken by the Executive Director to increase the effectiveness of, and the coordination and synergy between, multilateral environmental agreements, in addition to those activities supporting Governments in their efforts better to implement, to comply with and to 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 bodies;

19. *Welcomes* the outcomes of the Ad Hoc Joint Working Group on Enhancing Cooperation and Coordination Among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, as contained in its recommendations, and the adoption to date of the recommendations by the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal at its ninth meeting and the Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade at its fourth meeting;

20. *Requests* the Executive Director, in the event that the Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants also adopts those recommendations at its fourth meeting, to undertake relevant actions envisaged in the recommendations, as appropriate, within the framework of the approved programme of work of the United Nations Environment Programme and within the available resources;

## VI

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

21. *Welcomes* the efforts of the Executive Director in his capacity as chair of the Environment Management Group and those of its members in promoting cooperation throughout the United Nations system on environmental activities, including its support to the commitment made by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination on moving the United Nations towards climate neutrality;

22. *Requests* the Executive Director to invite the Environment Management Group to promote cooperation throughout the United Nations system to assist States Members to implement the

international environmental agenda, and to make the operations of the United Nations system sustainable.

## II. Follow-up to paragraph 169 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome

2. The 2005 World Summit Outcome, which sets the global policy agenda agreed to by world leaders, tackles, among other issues, international environmental governance, especially in the context of United Nations reform. In paragraph 169 of the Outcome, Governments agreed to explore the possibility of a more coherent institutional framework, including a more integrated structure, for environmental activities in the United Nations system by improving the key areas of concern, including enhanced coordination; improved policy advice and guidance; strengthened scientific knowledge, assessment and cooperation; better treaty compliance, with due respect for the legal autonomy of treaties; and better integration of environmental activities in the broader sustainable development framework at the operational level, including through capacity-building.

3. 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.<sup>8</sup> Following a series of consultations during 2007, the co-chairs of the informal consultative process presented an option paper in June 2007. The General Assembly, by its resolution 62/195 of 19 December 2007, recognized the need for more efficient environmental activities in the United Nations system and noted the need to consider possible options to address this need, including through the informal consultative process on the institutional framework for United Nations environmental activities.

4. Having ensured further consideration by States Members on various issues relating to international environmental governance, the co-chairs, on the basis of the discussions that had taken place between the States Members during the informal consultative process, prepared a draft resolution on the subject in July 2008 for consideration by States Members. The draft resolution is currently under consideration by the General Assembly. Throughout the process, due consideration has been given to resolution 62/277 of 15 September 2008, by which the General Assembly decided that the continuing and deepening intergovernmental work of the General Assembly on system-wide coherence would focus exclusively and in an integrated manner on the "Delivering as one" approach at the country and regional levels, harmonization of business practices, funding, governance, and gender equality and the empowerment of women, excluding in that context the issues of environment and environmental governance, humanitarian assistance and human rights, in line with the considerations set out in the report attached to the resolution.

### **Universal membership of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum**

5. The General Assembly, by its resolution 61/205 of 20 December 2006, decided to consider, if necessary, the issue of universal membership of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum of UNEP at its sixty-fourth session, while noting the differences in views expressed on that important but complex issue.

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

6. In accordance with decision 24/1 of the Governing Council, the Executive Director has continued to accord high priority to the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building. The implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan has been built into the programme of work of UNEP. Capacity-building and technology support activities are an integral part of the 2008–2009 work programme. Implementation for the first quarter of the biennium 2008–2009 shows that over 40 per cent of UNEP activities across the subprogrammes contribute directly to Bali Strategic Plan implementation. Almost 75 per cent of these activities are technical assistance and capacity-building interventions, which are being implemented with the support of UNEP regional offices to strengthen the capacities of developing countries and countries with economies in transition. Pursuant to the same decision, biannual reports on progress in the implementation of the Bali Strategic

---

<sup>8</sup> 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 Representatives of Mexico and Switzerland as the co-chairs of the informal process.

Plan are submitted, as part of the organization's programme performance report, to the Committee of Permanent Representatives. The first quarter report for the biennium 2008–2009 is available at [http://www.unep.org/pdf/UNEP\\_PPR\\_0809\\_6-month.pdf](http://www.unep.org/pdf/UNEP_PPR_0809_6-month.pdf).

7. The medium-term strategy for the period 2010–2013 places strong and renewed emphasis on UNEP significantly enhancing its capacity to deliver on the Bali Strategic Plan, and states that “first and foremost UNEP will ensure that capacity-building and technology support run through the implementation of all priority areas and constitute an integral part of the UNEP programmes of work”.

#### **IV. Strengthening the scientific base of UNEP**

8. By paragraph 7 of its decision 24/1 III, the Governing Council requested the Executive Director to consult Governments, other United Nations bodies, financial institutions including the Global Environment Facility, the private sector and civil society, multilateral environmental agreements, the scientific community including global observing systems, and other partners with a view to improving further the proposed Environment Watch strategy as an integral part of the wider strategic vision of UNEP. It also requested the Executive Director to report back to the Governing Council at its twenty-fifth session with a revised proposal that should include component cost estimates for work proposed for the biennium 2010–2011 and to make those estimates available to the Committee of Permanent Representatives early in the budget process.

9. A more detailed report on the matter is contained in document UNEP/GC.25/INF/20. It responds to the comments by the Council/Forum at its twenty-fourth session and includes the updated Environment Watch strategy as an integral component of implementation of the medium-term strategy through the programme of work with a particular focus on capacity-building to provide environmental information for policy setting and decision-making. The revised strategy takes into account the comments received as a result of the consultative process and reviews its support to the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan and the “Delivering as one” approach at the national level. It also includes an indicative costing. Suggested action by the Council is contained in the present document for the consideration of the Council/Forum as part of its wider deliberations on international environmental governance.

#### **V. Strengthening the financing of UNEP**

##### **A. Implementation of the voluntary indicative scale of contributions**

10. By its decision 24/1, the Governing Council 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, together with effective coordination of the environmental component of sustainable development. It 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 determining the programme of work and priorities of UNEP. It also encouraged Governments, taking into account their economic and social circumstances, to make voluntary contributions to the Environment Fund in an amount equal to or greater than that suggested by the voluntary indicative scale of contributions or on the basis of any of the other voluntary options listed in paragraph 18 of the appendix to decision SS.VII/1.

##### **B. Voluntary indicative scale of contributions in 2003, 2004–2005, 2006–2007 and 2008–2009**

11. In August 2002, pursuant to Governing Council decision SS.VII/1, requesting the introduction of a voluntary indicative scale of contributions for the Environment Fund and its biennial budget, the Executive Director launched the pilot phase of the voluntary indicative scale of contributions for the second year of the biennium 2002–2003. A letter was sent to all the Governments of United Nations States Members inviting them to join the pilot phase of the voluntary indicative scale of contributions in 2003.

12. 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 States Members of the United Nations to consider making regular and adequate contributions to the Environment Fund;
- (c) Maintaining the level of high and adequate contributions by Governments;
- (d) Inviting countries contributing in an amount less than that indicated by the scale or below their previously high levels to increase their contributions gradually.

13. The same principles were applied for the development of the scale in the budget cycles for 2004–2005, 2006–2007 and 2008–2009. The main results achieved by UNEP through the introduction of the scale are as follows:

- (a) Significant broadening of the donor base. A total of 157 United Nations States Members pledged or paid one or more contributions during the last six years; unfortunately, not all donor countries maintained their regular annual contributions;
- (b) Higher voluntary payments to the Environment Fund; more than 75 per cent of Governments paid more or a similar amount to that set out in the voluntary indicative scale of contributions. As a result, pledges and contributions to the Environment Fund increased by more than 85 per cent, from \$48 million in 2003 to more than \$88 million in 2008;
- (c) Higher predictability of voluntary contributions to the Environment Fund, as more countries are making early and long-term pledges, following the scale proposed by UNEP, before the beginning of the biennium;
- (d) Improved financial stability, as the majority of countries maintained at least the level of their prior voluntary payments to the Environment Fund. The Environment Fund remained vulnerable, however, to exchange rate fluctuations and unpredictable decreases or even non-payments by some major donors;
- (e) Receipt of adequate, increased and timely contributions for a biennium cannot be guaranteed by the voluntary indicative scale of contributions as the contributions remain voluntary. UNEP should strive to continue building donor confidence through efficient results-based planning, including through the strategic direction provided by the medium-term strategy, timely delivery of its programme results, more evaluations of results at the subprogramme level and more efficient use of available funds;
- (f) More detailed information on the assessment of the voluntary indicative scale of contributions during the period 2003–2008 is set out in document UNEP/GC25/INF/14.

14. The Secretary-General acknowledged the success of the scale in his report to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session (A/63/201).

### **C. Mobilization of resources from the private sector and other major groups in accordance with applicable United Nations rules and procedures**

15. Partnership between UNEP and the private sector can take many forms, including programmatic partnerships, advocacy, fund-raising or contributions, including in-kind support. 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 projects and programme activities.

16. In 2008, UNEP revised its policy towards fund-raising with non-governmental bodies, including the private sector, foundations and individuals. The new guidelines on UNEP partnership with the private sector recognize the importance of engaging the non-governmental sector, which can provide support to UNEP work and the fulfilment of its mission.

17. UNEP will continue to rely on contributions from Governments as the main source of funding for its programme activities. Resource mobilization from the private sector is considered as supplementary and includes the following modalities:

- (a) Cooperation in the implementation of the programme of work through joint activities and support provided by financial and in-kind contributions through the mechanism of relevant legal instruments, such as donor agreements and memorandums of understanding, including:

- (i) Direct contributions to the Environment Fund or UNEP trust funds, earmarked contributions;
  - (ii) In-kind support to UNEP projects and initiatives, including equipment donations, products and services;
  - (iii) Direct support through the provision of cash and in-kind support to UNEP partners, including Governments, businesses, non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations that are involved in the implementation of the programme of work and special initiatives, together with contributions through other mechanisms, such as charitable organizations or foundations;
  - (iv) Partnership in technical assistance projects through cooperation with relevant stakeholders, including businesses, Governments, civil society and individuals;
  - (v) Partnership in resource mobilization, including fund-raising initiatives in support of UNEP programme of work priorities;
  - (vi) Partnership in cooperative projects whereby UNEP and a private partner develop jointly a product or service in line with and in furtherance of the UNEP programme of work priorities or as an input to resource mobilization;
- (b) Cooperation in promoting and advocating the environmental activities of the United Nations and UNEP at the country, regional and global levels;
  - (c) Policy dialogue on the main priorities of the UNEP programme of work.

## VI. Issues concerning multilateral environmental agreements

18. In accordance with decision 24/1 of the Governing Council, the Executive Director has continued activities aimed at enhancing cooperation between UNEP and multilateral environmental agreement secretariats and support for improving cooperation and coordination between multilateral environmental agreements, taking into account the autonomous decision-making authority of the conferences of the Parties to those agreements. In addition, the Executive Director has intensified efforts to support developing countries and countries with economies in transition for their implementation of such agreements, including through legal and technical assistance, advisory services and related training activities, in line with the priorities set out by the Bali Strategic Plan. 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 tackles programmatic issues concerning these areas. Governing Council decision SS.VII/1 has continued to provide strategic direction regarding improved coordination among and effectiveness of multilateral environmental agreements.

19. Since the twenty-fourth session of the Council/Forum, UNEP, in cooperation with the secretariats of the relevant multilateral environmental agreements and other partners, has organized numerous training activities designed to strengthen the capacities and competencies of officials from developing countries and countries with economies in transition to implement the respective agreements and to effectively participate in negotiations under those agreements. To support the efforts of countries to enhance their compliance with and enforcement of multilateral environmental agreements to which they are Parties, UNEP has further promoted the use of 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, together with the Manual on Compliance with and Enforcement of Multilateral Environmental Agreements, which sets out a comprehensive commentary on the Guidelines.

20. As a means to provide support to countries to strengthen their knowledge base on multilateral environmental agreements, UNEP has continued to develop relevant databases, publications and tools in cooperation with partner organizations, such as ECOLEX, a database providing a comprehensive global source of information on environmental law operated jointly by UNEP, the World Conservation Union and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), together with issue-based modules designed to facilitate the coherent implementation of multilateral environmental agreements at the national level.

21. As the Executive Director provides the secretariat or the secretariat functions of a number for global and regional multilateral environmental agreements, UNEP has extended its support through the provision of administrative support to those agreements, including:

- (a) Global agreements:
  - (i) Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer;
  - (ii) Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora;
  - (iii) Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals;
  - (iv) Convention on Biological Diversity and its Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety;
  - (v) Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal;
  - (vi) Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade (jointly with the Director-General of FAO);
  - (vii) Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants;
- (b) Regional agreements:
  - (i) Agreement on the Conservation of Bats in Europe;
  - (ii) Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas;
  - (iii) Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds;
  - (iv) Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians (interim);
  - (v) Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution and its protocols;
  - (vi) Convention for Cooperation in the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the West and Central African Region and its Protocol;
  - (vii) Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region and its Protocols;
  - (viii) Convention for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Eastern African Region and its Protocol;
  - (ix) Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea (interim).

22. In general, UNEP has continued to cooperate with relevant multilateral environmental agreements and their secretariats to tackle issues of common concern, a recent example of which was the organization of regional briefing meetings for Governments in the context of their preparations for the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in cooperation with the Convention secretariat. Programmatic cooperation between UNEP and the secretariats of relevant multilateral environmental agreements has been maintained in the undertaking of joint projects and capacity-building activities, among other things.

23. With a view to promoting greater coherence between the work of UNEP and UNEP-administered multilateral environmental agreements, the Executive Director has established a UNEP multilateral environmental agreements management team. The annual meeting of that team, which included the participation of the agreements management team and regional directors, was held in April 2008 to enhance effective administration, communication and ensure greater cohesion in tackling substantive issues of common interest, while recognizing the authority and autonomy of the relevant governing bodies.

24. There have been important recent developments in enhancing cooperation and coordination between the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions. The Ad Hoc Joint Working Group on Enhancing Cooperation and Coordination Among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, established by the respective conferences of the Parties, having met three times since March 2007,

concluded its work at its third meeting, held in Rome in March 2008, and adopted a set of recommendations. Those recommendations identified the general direction and practical course of action for the three conferences of the Parties and their respective Parties to improve cooperation and coordination at the national, regional and global levels, to enhance the implementation of the conventions and to improve effectiveness and efficiency in administering the conventions through joint administrative arrangements and services. In addition, it was recommended that simultaneous extraordinary meetings of the conferences of the Parties to the conventions should be held in conjunction with the eleventh special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum in 2010. The Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention at its ninth meeting, held in Bali, Indonesia, in June 2008, and the Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention at its fourth meeting, held in Rome in October 2008, both adopted the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Joint Working Group.

25. Were the recommendations to be adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention at its fourth meeting, to be held in Geneva in May 2009, they would become operational, after which the Executive Director, in consultation with the Director-General of FAO, would be required to undertake actions in providing joint administrative arrangements and the services of the secretariats of the conventions. In addition, UNEP would be invited, working in conjunction with FAO and other United Nations bodies, in particular the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and multilateral environmental agreement secretariats, to develop programmatic cooperation that would support the implementation of the three conventions in areas of common concern, such as sustainable development, trade, Customs (such as through the Green Customs initiative), transport, public health, labour, environment, agriculture and industry. In addition, UNEP, together with FAO and UNDP, would be invited to include such cooperation in their biennial work programmes.

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

26. By its decision 24/1, the Governing Council requested the Executive Director to promote coordination across the United Nations system on environmental activities, in particular those relevant to the operations of the United Nations system, keeping in mind paragraphs 36 and 37 of the appendix to decision SS.VII/1, through the work of the Environment Management Group. The Executive Director has pursued this request in his capacity as chair of the Environment Management Group. Members of the Group have been invited to identify issues on the international agenda that warrant joint efforts and the Group has served as a platform for bringing together the diverse perspectives, expertise and strengths of the United Nations system to tackle those issues. The working relationship between the Group and the Chief Executives Board for coordination has been strengthened and the service capacity of the Environment Management Group secretariat has been enhanced.

27. These mutual efforts have elevated the spirit of cooperation in the Group and its relevance as demonstrated by its cooperative efforts with regard to climate neutrality in the United Nations. The Group brought this issue to the attention of the Chief Executives Board in October 2007 in the form of a draft statement on moving towards a climate-neutral United Nations and a report providing a strategy to attain that aim. The Board took note of the report and agreed on a statement that outlined the rationale for moving towards climate neutrality. The Board was conscious of the need for its broader engagement to integrate the principles of sustainable development into the daily work routines and activities of the United Nations system. It recognized that leading by example would contribute to the ability of the United Nations to support developing countries better, given that those were the most vulnerable to climate change. The efforts of those United Nations bodies that had already taken the initiative to offset their emissions before the adoption of the common approach were commended. It was noted that enhancing energy efficiency and other mitigation measures could represent significant cost savings to the United Nations.

28. In the Board's statement, the heads of the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes committed themselves to moving their respective organizations towards climate neutrality at their headquarters and other United Nations duty stations, including in the context of facility operations and travel. In particular, by 2009, they agreed:

- (a) To estimate their greenhouse gas emissions in a manner consistent with accepted international standards;
- (b) To undertake efforts to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions to the extent possible;

(c) To analyse the cost implications and explore the budgetary modalities, including consulting with governing bodies as needed, of purchasing carbon offsets to attain climate neutrality.

29. The Board made this commitment with a view to attaining the goal of climate neutrality at a date to be set in the future, by reducing emissions first and then offsetting the remainder through the purchase of offsets from the Clean Development Mechanism that met the high international standards of additionality, transparency and verification and promote sustainable development in developing countries. The Board also supported the further development and implementation of a United Nations system-wide strategy for reaching climate neutrality, monitoring the collective efforts and reporting back on progress made and difficulties encountered. The Environment Management Group was requested to provide the Board, through the High-level Committee on Programmes and the High-level Committee on Management, with progress reports on implementation of the commitment made by the Board. This was reiterated by the Secretary-General when he appointed the Environment Management Group as the convener for a climate-neutral United Nations within the Climate Change Action framework of the Board.

30. The implementation of the climate-neutral United Nations initiative is guided and supported by the Environment Management Group. Its support is coordinated by the secretariat of the Group in close consultation with the designated climate-neutral focal points of each member and the Sustainable United Nations initiative under the UNEP Division of Technology, Industry and Economics. The focal points also constituted a climate-neutral issue management group under the Environment Management Group whose efforts have yielded significant results.

31. Most United Nations bodies have now designated climate-neutral focal points, eight have established internal task forces to address climate neutrality within their organization, while 10 have designated a senior-level “champion” to drive the process. Eight organizations have prepared a strategy document outlining how they intend to move towards climate neutrality. The main sources of greenhouse gas emissions are from official travel and vehicles, refrigerant use in air conditioning and electricity consumption. Good progress has been made by organizations in estimating their greenhouse gas footprints with some 17 agencies having initiated the process, eight of which have preliminary data and four of which have final or near-final figures. Some 10 agencies have developed strategies outlining how they intend to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, of which seven have already begun implementing measures. Seven organizations have organized specific climate-neutral events through the purchase of offsets.

32. A United Nations climate-neutral knowledge management website (<http://www.unemg.org>) has been set up to provide a platform for sharing experiences, tools, methods, guidelines, benchmarking and documenting best-practices. In addition, it will document the greenhouse gas emissions and reductions in emissions of individual agencies. An evaluation by the Office of Internal Oversight on the initial phase of the initiative, which will provide advice on the process, is expected to be available in early 2009. Additional efforts to follow include agreeing on methodological issues, where a common approach is needed, providing support to the implementation of and reporting on the commitments for 2009, which for many agencies are implemented in the wider context of greening their operations through the establishment of environmental management systems, and the preparation of possible next joint steps in the initiative by the Environment Management Group and the Chief Executives Board.

33. Closely linked with the climate neutrality issue and in the context of making the United Nations systems operations sustainable, the Environment Management Group has continued its work on sustainable procurement, following a survey in 2006 on existing practices in United Nations procurement. On the basis of the survey, the Group decided at its annual meeting held in October 2007 to develop, through its issue management group on procurement, tools and training materials for United Nations agencies to support them in promoting sustainable procurement practices.

34. The Environment Management Group has also been entrusted with attending to the inter-agency aspects of international environmental governance processes. In response to a request from the Deputy Secretary-General, the Executive Director, in his capacity as chair of the Group, entrusted its secretariat with gathering views from members on the options considered in the informal consultations under the General Assembly on environmental activities in the United Nations. An initial set of comments from the agencies was presented by the Secretariat to the informal consultations and they were also considered by the annual meeting of the Group. At that meeting, the Group initiated a stocktaking of collaborative initiatives and actions within the United Nations system in the field of the environment. The outcome of that exercise will be presented to the Group and could serve partly as a basis for a review of its strategic approach and for the identification of new agenda issues. The secretariat is currently consulting with members on modalities for potential cooperation in support of two new issues:

the 10-year strategic plan and framework for the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa and the achievement of the 2010 biodiversity targets.

---