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## **IV. INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS**

116. The achievement of sustainable development requires continued support from international institutions. The institutional framework outlined in chapter 38 of Agenda 21 and determined by the General Assembly in its resolution 47/191 and other relevant resolutions, including the specific functions and roles of various organs, organizations and programmes within and outside the United Nations system, will continue to be fully relevant in the period after the special session of the General Assembly. In the light of the ongoing discussions on reform within the United Nations, international institutional arrangements in the area of sustainable development are intended to contribute to the goal of strengthening the entire United Nations system. In this context, the strengthening of the institutions for sustainable development, as well as the achievement of the goals and objectives set out below, is particularly important.

### **A. Greater coherence in various intergovernmental organizations and processes**

117. Given the increasing number of decision-making bodies concerned with various aspects of sustainable development, including international conventions, there is an ever greater need for better policy coordination at the intergovernmental level, as well as for continued and more concerted efforts to enhance collaboration among the secretariats of those decision-making bodies. Under the guidance of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council should play

a strengthened role in coordinating the activities of the United Nations system in the economic, social and related fields.

118. The conferences of the parties to conventions signed at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development or as a result of it, as well as other conventions related to sustainable development, should cooperate in exploring ways and means of collaborating in their work to advance the effective implementation of the conventions. There is also a need for environmental conventions to continue to pursue sustainable development objectives consistent with their provisions and be fully responsive to Agenda 21. To this end, *inter alia*, the conferences of the parties to or governing bodies of the conventions signed at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, or as a result of it, and of other relevant conventions and agreements should, if appropriate, give consideration to the co-location of secretariats, to improving the scheduling of meetings, to integrating national reporting requirements, to improving the balance between sessions of the conferences of the parties and sessions of their subsidiary bodies, and to encouraging and facilitating the participation of Governments in those sessions, at an appropriate level.

119. Institutional arrangements for the convention secretariats should provide effective support and efficient services, while ensuring the appropriate autonomy necessary for them to be efficient at their respective locations. At the international and national levels there is a need for, *inter alia*, better scientific assessment of ecological linkages between the conventions; identification of programmes that have multiple benefits; and enhanced public awareness-raising with respect to the conventions. Such tasks should be undertaken by UNEP in accordance with the relevant decisions of its Governing Council and in full cooperation with the conferences of the parties to and governing bodies of relevant conventions. Efforts of

convention secretariats, in response to requests from the respective conferences of the parties, to explore, where appropriate, modalities for suitable liaison arrangements in Geneva and/or New York for the purpose of enhancing linkages with delegations and organizations at those United Nations centres are welcomed and fully supported.

120. It is necessary to strengthen the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development of the Administrative Committee on Coordination and its system of task managers, with a view to further enhancing system-wide intersectoral cooperation and coordination for the implementation of Agenda 21 and for the promotion of coordinated follow-up to the major United Nations conferences in the area of sustainable development.

121. The Commission on Sustainable Development should promote increased regional implementation of Agenda 21 in cooperation with relevant regional and subregional organizations and the United Nations regional commissions, in accordance with the results of their priority-setting efforts, with a view to enhancing the role such bodies play in the achievement of sustainable development objectives agreed at the international level. The regional commissions could provide appropriate support, consistent with their work programmes, to regional meetings of experts related to the implementation of Agenda 21.

## **B. Role of relevant organizations and institutions of the United Nations system**

122. In order to facilitate the national implementation of Agenda 21, all organizations and programmes of the United Nations system, within their respective areas of expertise and mandates, should strengthen, individually and jointly, the sup-

port for national efforts to implement Agenda 21 and make their efforts and actions consistent with national plans, policies and priorities of member States. Coordination of United Nations activities at the field level should be further enhanced through the resident coordinator system in full consultation with national Governments.

123. The role of UNEP, as the principal United Nations body in the field of the environment, should be further enhanced. Taking into account its catalytic role, and in conformity with Agenda 21 and the Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme, adopted on 7 February 1997,<sup>35</sup> UNEP is to be the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system, and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment. In this context, UNEP Governing Council decision 19/32 of 4 April 1997 on governance of the United Nations Environment Programme<sup>36</sup> and other related Governing Council decisions are relevant.<sup>36</sup> The role of UNEP in the further development of international environmental law should be strengthened, including the development of coherent interlinkages among relevant environmental conventions in cooperation with their respective conferences of the parties or governing bodies. In performing its functions related to the conventions signed at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development or as a result of it, and other relevant conventions, UNEP should strive to promote the effective implementation of those conventions in a manner consistent with the provisions of the conventions and the decisions of the conferences of the parties.

124. UNEP, in the performance of its role, should focus on environmental issues, taking into account the development

perspective. A revitalized UNEP should be supported by adequate, stable and predictable funding. UNEP should continue providing effective support to the Commission on Sustainable Development, *inter alia*, in the form of scientific, technical and policy information and analysis of and advice on global environmental issues.

125 UNDP should continue to strengthen its contribution to and programmes in sustainable development and the implementation of Agenda 21 at all levels, particularly in the area of promoting capacity-building (including through its Capacity 21 programme) in cooperation with other organizations, as well as in the field of poverty eradication.

126. UNCTAD, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 51/167 and relevant decisions of the Trade and Development Board on the work programme, should continue to play a key role in the implementation of Agenda 21 through the integrated examination of linkages among trade, investment, technology, finance and sustainable development.

127. The Committee on Trade and Environment of the World Trade Organization, UNCTAD and UNEP should advance their coordinated work on trade and environment, involving other appropriate international and regional organizations in their cooperation and coordination. In coordination with the World Trade Organization, UNCTAD and UNEP should continue to support efforts to promote the integration of trade, environment and development. The Commission on Sustainable Development should continue to play its important role in the deliberations on trade and environment so as to facilitate the integrated consideration of all factors relevant for achieving sustainable development.

**The role of UNEP,  
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128. Implementation of the commitment of the international financial institutions to sustainable development should continue to be strengthened. The World Bank has a significant role to play, bearing in mind its expertise and the overall volume of resources that it commands.

129. Operationalization of the global mechanism of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, is also essential.

### **C. Future role and programme of work of the Commission on Sustainable Development**

130. The Commission on Sustainable Development, within its mandate as specified in General Assembly resolution 47/191, will continue to provide a central forum for reviewing progress and for urging further implementation of Agenda 21 and other commitments made at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development or as a result of it; for conducting a high-level policy debate aimed at consensus-building on sustainable development; and for catalysing action and long-term commitment to sustainable development at all levels. It should continue to undertake these tasks in complementing and providing interlinkages to the work of other United Nations organs, organizations and bodies acting in the field of sustainable development. The Commission has a role to play in assessing the challenges of globalization as they relate to sustainable development. The Commission should perform its functions in coordination with other subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council and with related organizations and institutions, including making recommendations, within its mandate, to the Economic and Social Council,

bearing in mind the interrelated outcomes of recent United Nations conferences.

131. The Commission should focus on issues that are crucial to achieving the goals of sustainable development. It should promote policies that integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainability and should provide for integrated consideration of linkages, both among sectors and between sectoral and cross-sectoral aspects of Agenda 21. In this connection, the Commission should carry out its work in such a manner as to avoid unnecessary duplication and repetition of work undertaken by other relevant forums.

**The Commission on Sustainable Development will continue to provide a central forum for urging further implementation of Agenda 21 and for high-level policy debate on sustainable development.**

132. In the light of the above, it is recommended that the Commission on Sustainable Development adopt the multi-year programme of work for the period 1998-2002 contained in the appendix below.

#### **D. Methods of work of the Commission on Sustainable Development**

133. Based on the experience gained during the period 1993-1997, the Commission, under the guidance of the Economic and Social Council, should:

(a) Make concerted efforts to attract the greater involvement in its work of ministers and high-level national policy makers responsible for specific economic and social sectors, who, in particular, are encouraged to participate in the annual high-level segment of the Commission, together with the ministers and policy makers responsible for environment

and development. The high-level segments of the Commission should become more interactive, and should focus on the priority issues being considered at a particular session. The Bureau of the Commission should conduct timely and open-ended consultations with a view to improving the organization of the work of the high-level segment;

(b) Continue to provide a forum for the exchange of national experience and best practices in the area of sustainable development, including through voluntary national communications or reports. Consideration should be given to the results of ongoing work aimed at streamlining requests for national information and reporting and to the results of the “pilot phase” relating to indicators of sustainable development. In this context, the Commission should consider more effective modalities for the further implementation of the commitments made in Agenda 21, with appropriate emphasis on the means of implementation. Countries may wish to submit to the Commission, on a voluntary basis, information regarding their efforts to incorporate the relevant recommendations of other United Nations conferences in national sustainable development strategies;

(c) The Commission should take into account regional developments related to the implementation of the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. It should provide a forum for the exchange of experience on regional and subregional initiatives and regional collaboration for sustainable development. This could include the promotion of the voluntary regional exchange of national experience in the implementation of Agenda 21 and, *inter alia*, the possible development of modalities for reviews within regions by and among those countries that voluntarily agree to do so. In this context, the Commission should encourage the availability of funding for the implementation of initiatives related to such reviews;



(d) Establish closer interaction with international financial, development and trade institutions, as well as with other relevant bodies within and outside the United Nations system, including the World Bank, GEF, UNDP, the World Trade Organization, UNCTAD and UNEP, which, in turn, are invited to take full account of the results of policy deliberations in the Commission and to integrate them in their own work programmes and activities;

(e) Strengthen its interaction with representatives of major groups, including through greater and better use of focused dialogue sessions and round tables. These groups are important resources in operationalizing, managing and promoting sustainable development and contribute to the implementation of Agenda 21. The major groups are encouraged to adopt arrangements for coordination and interaction in providing inputs to the Commission. Taking into account the Commission's programme of work, this could include inputs from:

(i) The scientific community and research institutions, relating to the greater understanding of the interactions between human activity and natural ecosystems and on how to manage global systems sustainably;

(ii) Women, children and youth, indigenous people and their communities, non-governmental organizations, local authorities, workers and their trade unions and farmers on the elaboration, promotion and sharing of effective strategies, policies, practices and processes to promote sustainable development,

(iii) Business and industry groups on the elaboration, promotion and sharing of sustainable development practices and the promotion of corporate responsibility and accountability;

(f) Organize the implementation of its next multi-year programme of work in the most effective and productive way,

including through shortening its annual meeting to two weeks. The inter-sessional ad hoc working groups should help to focus the Commission's sessions by identifying key elements to be discussed and important problems to be addressed within specific items of the Commission's programme of work. Government hosted and funded expert meetings will continue to provide inputs to the work of the Commission.

134. The Secretary-General is invited to review the functioning of the High-level Advisory Board on Sustainable Development and present proposals on ways to promote more direct interaction between the Board and the Commission, with a view to ensuring that the Board contributes to the deliberations on specific themes considered by the Commission in accordance with its programme of work.

135. The work of the Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and on Energy for Development and the Committee on Natural Resources should be more compatible with and supportive of the programme of work of the Commission. The Economic and Social Council, in carrying out its functions related to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/227, should consider, at its substantive session of 1997, the most effective means of bringing this about.

136. The arrangements for the election of the Bureau should be changed in order to allow the same Bureau to provide guidance in the preparations for and to lead the work during the annual sessions of the Commission. The Commission would benefit from such a change. The Economic and Social Council should take the necessary action at its substantive session of 1997 to ensure that these new arrangements take effect.

137. The next comprehensive review of progress achieved in the implementation of Agenda 21 by the General Assembly will take place in the year 2002. The modalities of this review should be determined at a later stage.

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## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.
- <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, annex I.
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, annex III (Non-legally Binding Authoritative Statement of Principles for a Global Consensus on the Management, Conservation and Sustainable Development of All Types of Forests).
- <sup>4</sup> As provided in Agenda 21, the term "Governments", when used herein, will be deemed to include as well the European Community within its area of competence.
- <sup>5</sup> Oxford, United Kingdom, Oxford University Press, 1997.
- <sup>6</sup> United Nations Environment Programme, *Convention on Biological Diversity* (Environmental Law and Institution Programme Activity Centre), June 1992.
- <sup>7</sup> *Report of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Bridgetown, Barbados, 25 April-6 June 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.I.18 and Corr.1 and 2), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.
- <sup>8</sup> *Official Records of the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea*, vol. XVII (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.84.V.3), document A/CONF.62/122.
- <sup>9</sup> *Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6-12 March 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.8), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, resolution 1, annex II.

- <sup>11</sup> *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II. (Note: All references in the present report to the platforms for or programmes of action of major conferences should be considered in a manner consistent with the reports of those conferences.)
- <sup>12</sup> See, *inter alia*, "A shared vision—conclusions from the Chairperson of the Brasilia Workshop on Sustainable Production and Consumption Patterns and Policies, held from 25 to 28 November 1996" (document E/CN.17/1997/19, annex, appendix).
- <sup>13</sup> See *Legal Instruments Embodying the Results of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations, done at Marrakesh on 15 April 1994*, GATT secretariat publication, Sales No. GATT/1994-7, vol. I.
- <sup>14</sup> Adopted by the Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization held at Singapore in December 1996. WT/MIN (96)/14.
- <sup>15</sup> *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5-13 September 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18). (Note: All references in the present report to the platforms for or programmes of action of major conferences should be considered in a manner consistent with the reports of those conferences.)
- <sup>16</sup> See World Health Organization, *Primary Health Care: Report of the International Conference on Primary Health Care, Alma-Ata, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, 6-12 September 1978* (Geneva, 1978).
- <sup>17</sup> *Report of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), Istanbul, 3-14 June 1996* (A/CONF.165/14), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.
- <sup>18</sup> See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council*,

1996, *Supplement No. 8* (E/1996/28), chap. I, sect. C, decision 4/15, para. 45 (a).

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 1997, *Supplement No. 9* (E/1997/29).

<sup>20</sup> See *Legal Instruments Embodying the Results of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations, done at Marrakesh on 14 April 1994* (GATT secretariat publication, Sales No. GATT/1994-7), vol. I.

<sup>21</sup> Berlin Mandate: review of the adequacy of article 4, paragraph 2 (a) and (b), of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, including proposals related to a protocol and decisions on follow-up (FCCC/CP/1995/7/Add.1, sect. I, decision 1/CP.1).

<sup>22</sup> Report of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change on its second session, Geneva, 8-19 July 1996 (FCCC/CP/1996/15/Add.1), annex.

<sup>23</sup> Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, *International Legal Materials*, vol. 26, No. 6 (November 1987), p. 1550.

<sup>24</sup> *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 25* (A/52/25), annex, decision 19/13.

<sup>25</sup> Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal (UNEP/WG/190/4) (United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1673, No. 28911, forthcoming).

<sup>26</sup> Bamako Convention on the Ban of the Import into Africa and the Control of Transboundary Movement and Management of Hazardous Wastes within Africa, *International Legal Materials*, vol. 30, No. 3 (May 1991), p. 775, and vol. 31, No. 1 (January 1992), p. 164.

<sup>27</sup> See *The Courier Africa-Caribbean-Pacific-European Community*, No. 120 (March April 1990).

<sup>28</sup> Where "management" appears in the section on radioactive

wastes, it is defined as handling, treatment, storage, transportation, including transboundary movement, and final disposal of such wastes.

- <sup>29</sup> Report of the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (UNEP/CBD/COP/3/38), annex II.
- <sup>30</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, *Report of the World Food Summit, Rome, 13-17 November 1996, Part One* (WFS 96/REP) (Rome, 1997), appendix.
- <sup>31</sup> See *Legal Instruments Embodying the Results of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations, done at Marrakesh on 15 April 1994* (GATT secretariat publication, Sales No. GATT/1994-7), vol. I.
- <sup>32</sup> Report of the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (UNEP/CBD/COP/3/38), annex II, decision III/12.
- <sup>33</sup> *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1997, Supplement No. 9* (E/1997/29), chap. I, resolution 5/1, para. 6.
- <sup>34</sup> *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1996, Supplement No. 8* (E/1996/28), chap. I, sect. C, decision 4/11.
- <sup>35</sup> *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 25* (A/52/25), annex, decision 19/1, annex.
- <sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, annex.

**APPENDIX**  
**MULTI-YEAR PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE**  
**COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, 1998-2002**

1998 session: Overriding issues: poverty/consumption and production patterns			
Sectoral theme:	Cross-sectoral theme:	Economic sector/major group:	
<b>STRATEGIC APPROACHES TO FRESHWATER MANAGEMENT</b>  Review of outstanding chapters of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States <sup>a</sup>	<b>TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY/CAPACITY-BUILDING/EDUCATION/SCIENCE/AWARENESS-RAISING</b>	<b>INDUSTRY</b>	
Main issues for an integrated discussion under the above theme:  Agenda 21, chapters 2-8, 10-15, 18-21, 23-34, 36, 37, 40.	Main issues for an integrated discussion under the above theme:  Agenda 21, chapters 2-4, 6, 16, 23-37, 40.	Main issues for an integrated discussion under the above theme:  Agenda 21, chapters 4, 6, 9, 16, 17, 19-21, 23-35, 40.	

1999 session: Overriding issues: poverty/consumption and production patterns			
Comprehensive review of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States			
Sectoral theme: OCEANS AND SEAS	Cross-sectoral theme: CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION PATTERNS	Economic sector/major group: TOURISM	
Main issues for an integrated discussion under the above theme: Agenda 21, chapters 5-7, 9, 15, 17, 19-32, 34-36, 39-40.	Main issues for an integrated discussion under the above theme: Agenda 21, chapters 2-10, 14, 18-32, 34-36, 40.	Main issues for an integrated discussion under the above theme: Agenda 21, chapters 2-7, 13, 15, 17, 23-33, 36.	
2000 session: Overriding issues: poverty/consumption and production patterns			
Sectoral theme: INTEGRATED PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT OF LAND RESOURCES	Cross-sectoral theme: FINANCIAL RESOURCES/ TRADE AND INVESTMENT/ ECONOMIC GROWTH	Economic sector/major group: AGRICULTURE <sup>b</sup> Day of Indigenous People	
Main issues for an integrated discussion under the above theme: Agenda 21, chapters 2-8, 10-37, 40.	Main issues for an integrated discussion under the above theme: Agenda 21, chapters 2-4, 23-33, 36-38, 40.	Main issues for an integrated discussion under the above theme: Agenda 21, chapters 2-7, 10-16, 18-21, 23-34, 37, 40.	



2001 session: Overriding issues: poverty/consumption and production patterns		
Sectoral theme:  ATMOSPHERE/ENERGY	Cross-sectoral theme:  INFORMATION FOR DECISION-MAKING AND PARTICIPATION  INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT	Economic sector/major group:  ENERGY/TRANSPORT
Main issues for an integrated discussion under the above theme: Agenda 21, chapters 4, 6-9, 11-14, 17, 23-37, 39-40	Main issues for an integrated discussion under the above theme: Agenda 21, chapters 2, 4, 6, 8, 23-36, 38-40.	Main issues for an integrated discussion under the above theme: Agenda 21, chapters 2-5, 8, 9, 20, 23-37, 40.
2002 session		
Comprehensive review		

<sup>a</sup> Review to include those chapters of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States not covered in the in-depth review carried out by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its fourth session.

<sup>b</sup> Including forestry