

Environment and human settlements

In 2008, the United Nations and the international community continued to work towards protecting the environment through legally binding instruments and the activities of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

The tenth special session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum discussed the emerging policy themes of globalization and the environment—mobilizing finance to meet the climate challenge, and international environmental governance and UN reform. The Executive Director developed the UNEP Medium-term Strategy 2010–2013, which set out the vision and strategic direction for UNEP activities for that period. The Council authorized the Executive Director to use the Strategy in formulating the strategic frameworks and programmes of work and budgets for the 2010–2011 and 2012–2013 periods. In October, the Executive Director submitted the final review of the first UNEP long-term Tunza strategy (2003–2008) for engaging young people in environmental issues, and proposed a second long-term strategy (2009–2014).

In February, the General Assembly held a thematic debate on “Addressing Climate Change: The United Nations and the World at Work”. The UNEP Governing Council invited the Economic and Social Council to consider a proposal for proclaiming an international decade for addressing climate change for the 2010–2020 period. In a decision on the sustainable development of the Arctic region, the Governing Council requested the Governments of Arctic States and other stakeholders to implement measures to facilitate adaptation to climate change, including by indigenous communities. The twenty-eighth session of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, held in April in Budapest, Hungary, decided to produce a fifth assessment report on climate change, to be finalized in 2014. A global strategy was initiated to follow up on the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, which was completed in 2005.

In August, the Secretary-General recommended the establishment of the Eastern Mediterranean Oil Spill Restoration Trust Fund. The Fund would provide assistance and support to the States adversely affected by the oil slick that resulted from the destruction by Israel of oil storage tanks in Lebanon in 2006, following the outbreak of hostilities between Israel and the paramilitary group Hizbullah. The General Assembly established the Fund in December.

The ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, which took place in May in Bonn, Germany, adopted a roadmap for negotiating an international regime for access to and sharing the benefits of genetic resources.

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) continued to support the implementation of the 1996 Habitat Agenda and the Millennium Development Goals. A new Global Campaign for Sustainable Urbanization merged two previous campaigns on secure tenure and urban governance, and addressed the adaptation and mitigation challenges of climate change. In December, the UN-Habitat Committee of Permanent Representatives endorsed an action plan for implementing the 2008–2013 Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan.

Environment

UN Environment Programme

Governing Council/Ministerial Forum

The tenth special session of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Governing Council (GC)/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GMEF) was held in Monaco from 20 to 22 February [A/63/25].

Ministerial-level consultations (20–22 February) discussed the emerging policy themes of international environmental governance and UN reform, and globalization and the environment—mobilizing finance to meet the climate challenge and international environmental governance. The Council/Forum had before it a background paper [UNEP/GCSS.X/9] including policy options emanating from the President’s summary of the ministerial consultations held during the twenty-fourth (2007) GC/GMEF session [YUN 2007, p. 1045].

The Committee of the Whole [UNEP/GCSS.X/10], established by the Council/Forum on 20 February, considered policy issues, including the state of the environment; environment and development; and follow-up to and implementation of the outcomes of UN summits and major intergovernmental meetings, including Governing Council decisions. The policy statement by UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner was also annexed to the report on the proceedings.

On 23 July (**decision 2008/242**), the Economic and Social Council took note of the Governing Council's report on its tenth special session.

The General Assembly took note of the report in resolution 63/220 of 19 December (see below).

Subsidiary body

In 2008, the Committee of Permanent Representatives, which was open to representatives of all UN Member States and members of specialized agencies, held an extraordinary meeting on 5 February [UNEP/CPR/102/3] and regular meetings on 18 June [UNEP/CPR/104/2], 17 September [UNEP/CPR/105/2] and 15 December [UNEP/CPR/106/2]. The Committee discussed, among other matters, preparations for the twenty-fifth (2009) Governing Council session.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 19 December [meeting 72], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Second (Economic and Financial) Committee [A/63/414/Add.7], adopted **resolution 63/220** without vote [agenda item 49 (g)].

Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its tenth special session

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 2997(XXVII) of 15 December 1972, 53/242 of 28 July 1999, 56/193 of 21 December 2001, 57/251 of 20 December 2002, 58/209 of 23 December 2003, 59/226 of 22 December 2004, 60/189 of 22 December 2005, 61/205 of 20 December 2006 and 62/195 of 19 December 2007,

Recalling also the 2005 World Summit Outcome,

Recognizing the need for more efficient environmental activities in the United Nations system, and noting the need to consider possible options to address this need, including through the ongoing informal consultative process on the institutional framework for United Nations environmental activities,

Taking into account Agenda 21 and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development ("Johannesburg Plan of Implementation"),

Reaffirming the role of the United Nations Environment Programme as the leading global environmental authority and principal body within the United Nations system in the field of environment, which should take into account, within its mandate, the sustainable development needs of developing countries,

Emphasizing that capacity-building and technology support to developing countries in environment-related fields are important components of the work of the United Nations Environment Programme,

Recognizing the need to accelerate implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building, including through the provision of additional financial resources for that purpose,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its tenth special session and the decisions contained therein;

2. *Welcomes* the continued efforts of the United Nations Environment Programme in shifting emphasis from delivery of outputs to achievement of results within its budget and programme of work, and also welcomes, in this regard, the United Nations Environment Programme Medium-term Strategy 2010–2013, which is results-based and elaborates six cross-cutting thematic priority areas of work and various means of implementation as a way of strengthening the work of the United Nations Environment Programme, bearing in mind all the relevant provisions of decisions of the Governing Council, and in this regard invites partner organizations to cooperate closely with the Programme;

3. *Stresses* the need to further advance and fully implement the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building, in this regard calls upon Governments and other stakeholders in a position to do so to provide the necessary funding and technical assistance, and welcomes the particular emphasis of the Medium-term Strategy 2010–2013 on significantly enhancing the capacity of the United Nations Environment Programme to deliver on the Bali Strategic Plan;

4. *Recognizes* the progress made so far in the implementation of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, particularly through its Quick Start Programme, and invites Governments, regional economic integration organizations, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations to engage actively and cooperate closely to support the Strategic Approach implementation activities of the United Nations Environment Programme, including by providing adequate resources;

5. *Also recognizes* the global challenges posed by mercury, and, in this regard, welcomes the work of the ad hoc open-ended working group on mercury, established by the Governing Council at its twenty-fourth session, to review and assess options for enhanced voluntary measures and new or existing international legal instruments, and notes that the Governing Council will consider the outcomes of the work of the ad hoc open-ended working group at its twenty-fifth regular session;

6. *Emphasizes* the need for the United Nations Environment Programme, within its mandate, to further contribute to sustainable development programmes, the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, at all levels, and to the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development, bearing in mind the mandate of the Commission;

7. *Notes* that the Governing Council, at its tenth special session, emphasized the need to implement fully its decision SS.VII/1 on international environmental governance, and also notes the continued discussions scheduled for the twenty-fifth session of the Governing Council;

8. *Recognizes* that the current global crises could adversely impact sustainable development and the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, emphasizes

the need for mobilization of adequate funding to address their environmental aspects, and takes note of the proposal of the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, following consultations with the Bureau of the Governing Council and the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the Programme, to address “Global crisis: national chaos?” as one of the themes for the ministerial consultations, to be held at the twenty-fifth session of the Governing Council;

9. *Emphasizes* the need to further enhance coordination and cooperation among the relevant United Nations organizations in the promotion of the environmental dimension of sustainable development, and to enhance the cooperation between the United Nations Environment Programme and regional and subregional organizations, and welcomes the continued active participation of the Programme in the United Nations Development Group and the Environment Management Group;

10. *Takes note* of the finding of *Global Environment Outlook: Environment for Development*, published by the United Nations Environment Programme, that current environmental degradation represents a serious challenge for human well-being and sustainable development, and expresses its deep concern over the evidence of unprecedented environmental changes at all levels, including possible irreversible changes with potentially negative implications for economic and social development, especially for the poor and vulnerable groups in society;

11. *Reaffirms* the need to strengthen the scientific base of the United Nations Environment Programme, as recommended by the intergovernmental consultation on strengthening of the scientific base of the Programme, including the reinforcement of the scientific capacity of developing countries, in the area of protection of the environment, including through the provision of adequate financial resources, and in this respect emphasizes the importance of building on the experiences gained from the preparation of different global environmental assessments as well as other relevant developments in this field;

12. *Reiterates* the need for stable, adequate and predictable financial resources for the United Nations Environment Programme, and, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 2997(XXVII), underlines the need to consider the adequate reflection of all administrative and management costs of the Programme in the context of the United Nations regular budget;

13. *Invites* Governments that are in a position to do so to increase their contributions to the Environment Fund;

14. *Emphasizes* the importance of the Nairobi headquarters location of the United Nations Environment Programme, and requests the Secretary-General to keep the resource needs of the Programme and the United Nations Office at Nairobi under review so as to permit the delivery, in an effective manner, of necessary services to the Programme and to the other United Nations organs and organizations in Nairobi;

15. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-fourth session, under the item entitled “Sustainable development”, a sub-item entitled “Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its twenty-fifth session”.

International environmental governance

In November [UNEP/GC.25/3], the UNEP Executive Director submitted to the Governing Council a report summarizing actions taken or proposed on international environmental governance. The report discussed the follow-up to the 2005 World Summit Outcome [YUN 2005, p. 48], in which Governments agreed to explore the possibility of a more coherent institutional framework, including a more integrated structure, for UN system environmental activities, among other measures. Pursuant to the Outcome, the General Assembly established an informal consultative process on the institutional framework for UN environmental activities. Following consultations in 2007, the co-chairs of the process—Mexico and Switzerland—presented an option paper. In July 2008, the co-chairs prepared a draft resolution on international environmental governance for consideration by Member States. The report also dealt with the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building [YUN 2004, p. 1040]; strengthening the UNEP scientific base and financing; issues related to multilateral environmental agreements; and enhanced coordination across the UN system, including the Environment Management Group.

A December note by the Executive Director [UNEP/GC.25/INF/33] contained the 2008 report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the management review of environmental governance within the UN system [JIU/REP/2008/3].

Ministerial meeting. On 30 July [A/62/922], Costa Rica transmitted to the Secretary-General the final document of the Ministerial Meeting on International Environmental Governance (New York, 13 May). The objective of the Meeting, which was chaired by the Minister of Environment and Energy of Costa Rica, was to continue the dialogue on international environmental governance that had taken place in various forums over the previous year, and to elaborate proposals to strengthen UNEP as part of UN reform.

UNEP activities

Monitoring and assessment

In a decision of 22 February [A/63/25, dec. SS.X/5], the UNEP Governing Council expressed its continued concern over the evidence presented in the *Global Environment Outlook 4* report (GEO-4), published by UNEP in 2007 [YUN 2007, p. 1056], of unprecedented environmental changes at all levels. It acknowledged that environmental degradation represented a challenge for human well-being and sustainable development, and, in some cases, peace and security. The Council requested the Executive Director to encourage and support the efforts of national bodies to con-

duct assessments of environmental change and its implications for development within the framework of the Bali Strategic Plan [YUN 2004, p. 1040], which was adopted by the Governing Council in 2005 [YUN 2005, p. 1135]. It also asked the Executive Director, in consultation with the Committee of Permanent Representatives, to present to the Council an overview of the international environmental assessment landscape, identifying possible gaps and duplications, as well as options for the possible development of a scientifically credible and policy-relevant global assessment of environmental change and its implications for development, including a cost analysis and an indicative benefit analysis for each option.

In response to the Council's decision, the Executive Director in November submitted a report [UNEP/GC.25/4/Add.1], which provided a synthesis of the main findings of studies of the environmental assessment landscape at the national level, detailed in a November note [UNEP/GC.25/INF/12/Add.1], and at the global and regional levels, set out in a December note by the Executive Director [UNEP/GC.25/INF/12]. In the 15 years since the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) [YUN 1992, p. 670], environmental reporting had become a well-established process at the national level. The national-level study found broad differences in environmental assessment and reporting approaches. Of the 196 countries and territories examined, 161 (82 per cent), were involved in state-of-the-environment reporting, producing at least one such report since 1992 or having a first report in process; 35 (18 per cent) demonstrated no evidence of such reporting; 50 (26 per cent) published reports at regular intervals; and 11 countries and territories (6 per cent) no longer prepared reports. Current integrated environmental assessments were broader and more policy-relevant than previous reports, and they sought to provide scenarios that explored the consequences of possible policy options.

As to the regional and global assessment landscape, the report stated that regional assessments were often conducted within global assessment processes, including regional chapters in GEO-4 and the reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. There was, however, considerable overlap concerning the issues covered in the assessments, most notably in the area of biodiversity. The main gaps in the regional and global assessment process occurred less in the coverage and more in the awareness of the importance of designing a salient, credible and legitimate process to ensure that the assessment was influential. Progress was made in linking environmental change and changes in ecosystem services to human well-being in GEO-4 and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, which was launched in 2001 [YUN 2001, p. 961] and

completed in 2005 [YUN 2005, p. 1154]. The assessments of impacts and adaptations to climate change and GEO-4 also advanced the use of vulnerability assessment as a way to consider the impacts of multiple stresses, the differential exposure of individuals and societal groups and the importance of adaptive capacity. The science-policy interface in assessment processes varied widely, and it was often difficult to identify clearly the influence of particular assessments on policymaking. More attention to the design and documentation of assessment processes was needed to enhance their credibility, relevance and legitimacy. The goal of any assessment process was to influence policy and action, and much had been learned about the best ways to deliver the assessment results and most significant messages to target audiences. The overview study found a significant problem in gaining access to state of the environment information. While information technology provided easy access, few countries maintained a website storing a complete collection of their state of environment reports. In the case of printed reports, distribution was the limiting factor for reasons of cost, but electronic media were particularly fragile, as older information could be lost when websites were redesigned or abandoned. It was important for assessment processes to learn from the experience of others, which required the processes to be documented and stored in a central repository.

UNEP would work with countries in which environmental assessment was weak or non-existent to build their reporting capacity until it became self-sustaining. It would encourage regional cooperation in assessment and reporting and seek opportunities to join with multilateral environmental agreements and other partners to simplify reporting requirements and make them more coherent. UNEP and its partners would maintain web-based assessment databases with links to national assessment processes and review their content for significant regional and global trends. UNEP global environmental assessments had to provide an overview of the world environmental situation and an objective means to help policymakers set priorities. Future assessments should continue to be framed in the broader context of sustainable development. The report outlined guiding principles and best practices for future global assessments of environmental change. It also presented five options for the possible development of a future global assessment of environmental change, together with a cost and indicative benefit analysis for each. The options included updating global integrated environmental assessments to use information technology better (option 1); providing objective, expert outsourced assessments (option 2); providing a coherent set of integrated and thematic UNEP assessments (option 3); adopting an indicator-based approach (option 4); and undertaking targeted assessments on thematic priority

areas supported by a ‘UNEP-Live’ enabling framework (option 5). The report stated that option 3 was the preferred option in the near term, and that the online and interactive characteristics of that option should be targeted as a model for the long term.

In November [UNEP/GC.25/4], the Executive Director submitted to the Governing Council a report on the state of the environment and the UNEP contribution to addressing substantive environmental challenges. The report summarized issues emanating from UNEP activities in the area of assessment, monitoring and early warning. It also summarized services that UNEP provided to Governments and other stakeholders to build capacity in scientific environmental assessment and information for decision-making through the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building, adopted by the Council in 2005 [YUN 2005, p. 1135], and the “Delivering as one” approach [YUN 2006, p. 1584] within UN development assistance frameworks. The report discussed the findings of global assessments conducted since the twenty-fourth (2007) Governing Council session [YUN 2007, p. 1045], including GEO-4 (see below); the Global Outlook for Ice and Snow; Global Glacier Changes: Facts and Figures; the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development; the report World Resources 2008: Roots of Resilience—Growing the Wealth of the Poor; the World’s Protected Areas report; and the report of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation [A/63/46] (see p. 694).

A global strategy was initiated to follow up on the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. The four components of the strategy were to: build the knowledge base; integrate the ecosystem service approach into decision-making at all levels; enhance outreach and dissemination of the Assessment; and explore the needs and options for future global ecosystem services assessments. Together with follow-up partners, UNEP was implementing the strategy through a three-year project on implementing the Assessment’s findings and recommendations, focusing primarily on sub-global assessments; the first project meeting was held in April. UNEP also facilitated consultations with Governments and other stakeholders on the proposed intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services. At the first platform meeting (Putrajaya, Malaysia, 10–12 November), UNEP was requested to undertake a gap analysis and prepare a second meeting to explore and discuss mechanisms to improve the science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services.

A November note by the Executive Director [UNEP/GC.25/INF/11] contained a synthesis report of global environmental assessments, prepared by

the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency at the request of UNEP. It reviewed key messages of recent global environmental assessments and examined their policy messages in terms of: trends in persistent environmental problems, including the costs and benefits of early action and costs of inaction; policy options with regard to interlinked, persistent environmental problems; and effective policy-making.

Environment Watch strategy

In response to a 2007 Governing Council decision [YUN 2007, p. 1048], the Executive Director, in a November note [UNEP/GC.25/INF/20], presented the updated Environment Watch strategy: Vision 2020, first outlined in 2006 [YUN 2006, p. 1211], as an integral component of the implementation of the UNEP medium-term strategy (see p. 1153). The revised strategy was designed to achieve enhanced institutional, scientific and technological infrastructures and capacities for cooperation in keeping the state of the environment under review and providing timely, accurate and consistent environmental data and information across the six priorities of the medium-term strategy. It was based on five components: capacity-building and technology support; assessment; early warning, monitoring and observation; environmental indicators, data support and information-sharing; and networking and partnerships. Time-bound targets for each component were outlined in the note. Implementation of the Environment Watch strategy required a collective commitment by Governments and partners. National implementation would be monitored through the annual UN development assistance framework review and evaluation processes, as well as the evaluation of UNEP subprogrammes. Monitoring and evaluation of the overall strategy would be conducted through GC/GMEF and UNEP internal programme and project monitoring procedures. Targets to be met within time frames from 2009 to 2020 were outlined in an annex to the note. The note set out the expected benefits and added value of the strategy. The strategy would be implemented by the Executive Director in close cooperation with Governments, UN partners and a consortium of international organizations and financial institutions. The total estimated cost of implementation within the 2010–2011 UNEP programme of work was \$123.3 million. It was anticipated that UNEP would have to contribute 20 per cent of the estimated cost of delivery of any given service package.

Global Environment Outlook

By a December note [UNEP/GC.25/INF/13], the Executive Director transmitted a report setting out

the findings of the review of the initial impact of the fourth *Global Environmental Outlook: Environment for Development* report (GEO-4), published in 2007 [YUN 2007, p. 1056]. The report, prepared by a team of independent evaluation specialists, assessed the extent to which GEO-4 and its summary for decision-makers had reached their intended target groups, and examined the use and influence of GEO-4 in the 10 months following its launch. The review team found that GEO continued to fill an important niche in the global assessment landscape by being relevant and useful, and by adding value to most of its primary environmental constituencies. It concluded that more could be done to increase the use and influence of GEO assessments among stakeholders. More attention could also be given to maximizing the potential of GEO to ensure that environmental problems and emerging issues of wide international significance received appropriate and timely consideration by key stakeholders, particularly with respect to human and ecosystem well-being and the role of the private sector in global sustainable development. The report outlined the review's findings related to the use, utility and value, salience, and targeting and reach of GEO-4, as well as lessons learned in the review and the findings of the GEO-4 self-assessment survey.

UNEP Year Book

UNEP published its fifth annual report on the changing environment, the *UNEP Year Book 2008* (formerly known as the *GEO Year Book*), which highlighted the increasing complexity and interconnections of climate change, ecosystem integrity, human well-being and economic development. The *Year Book*, produced in collaboration with world environmental experts, examined the emergence and influence of economic mechanisms and market-driven approaches for addressing environmental degradation. It described recent findings and policy decisions that affected the response to changes in the global environment.

Support to Africa

In response to a 2007 Governing Council decision [YUN 2007, p. 1048], the Executive Director in October submitted a report [UNEP/GC.25/7] on support to Africa in environmental management and protection. The report summarized UNEP activities in Africa related to climate change, minimizing threats from the environmental causes and consequences of conflict and disaster, ecosystem management, environmental governance, alleviating the environmental and health impacts of harmful substances and hazardous wastes, and sustainable consumption and production. Under the project on capacity development for the Clean Development Mechanism, UNEP worked towards build-

ing the skills and knowledge of countries and companies to design, submit and secure cleaner energy schemes. The project's second phase (2007–2009) included Algeria, Mauritius and the United Republic of Tanzania. UNEP supported and provided substantive inputs to the twelfth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) (Johannesburg, South Africa, 7–12 June), which adopted a decision on developing a common negotiating position on a comprehensive international climate change regime beyond 2012 and a comprehensive framework of African climate change programmes. UNEP launched activities on environmental legislation, post-conflict assessment and capacity-building for the conservation and management of environmental resources in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The activities would provide environmental support to the UN country team and the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. UNEP was working to promote an integrated approach to ecosystem management to reverse the decline in ecosystem services and improve ecosystem resilience to external impacts. In Kenya, UNEP initiated a project to reduce emissions from deforestation in developing countries. The project also aimed to alleviate poverty and maintain water supplies in rivers leading into the Masai Mara National Reserve in Kenya and the Serengeti National Park in Tanzania. An Africa-wide rainwater harvesting programme was developed and presented for peer review at the first African Water Week (Tunis, Tunisia, 26–28 March). UNEP initiated a \$2.3 million project on improving water management and governance in African countries through support for developing and implementing integrated water resource management plans partially funded by the European Union; implementation began in 2008 and would continue for three years. The first inter-ministerial conference on health and environment in Africa (Libreville, Gabon, 26–29 August), organized jointly by the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNEP, focused on health security through healthy environments. The *Atlas of Africa's Changing Environment* was launched during the twelfth AMCEN session; the *Atlas* complemented the *Africa Environment Outlook* report and provided a graphical presentation of environmental change in the 53 countries of Africa using satellite images of selected sites. UNEP was working to support the goals of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development 2005–2014, proclaimed by the General Assembly in resolution 57/254 [YUN 2002, p. 826]; beginning in February, it was engaged in establishing the Kenya e-Learning Centre and its environmental component. The fifth African round table on sustainable consumption and production, organized as a pre-session event to the twelfth AMCEN session, reviewed progress made in the African Programme to facilitate Africa's participation

in the Marrakech Process on sustainable consumption and production [YUN 2003, p. 840] and identified follow-up actions and future directions, which were endorsed by AMCEN. UNEP, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa produced *The State of African Cities 2008*, a report examining trends in urban growth, productivity, governance and environmental sustainability.

The UNEP programme in Africa continued to face challenges in its delivery. The lack of funding from the UNEP Environment Fund posed a threat to achieving the expected results, and more importantly, to fulfilling the expectations of Governments and other key stakeholders. Another major challenge was fragmentation and lack of coherence in delivery—a programmatic approach was needed with sufficient resources for its implementation. Coordination and collaboration, including with multilateral environmental agreement secretariats, were critical in the delivery of the UNEP programme in the region. Integration of the work of the UNEP divisions and the regional offices had to be enhanced.

Water policy and strategy

In response to a 2007 Governing Council decision [YUN 2007, p. 1050], the Executive Director in October submitted a report [UNEP/GC.25/9 & Corr.1] on implementation in 2007 and 2008 of the UNEP water policy and strategy, adopted by the Council in 2007 [ibid.]. The report discussed progress in implementing the three components of the strategy: assessment, management and coordination. Under the assessment component, UNEP undertook water vulnerability assessments for Central Asia, North-East Asia, South Asia and South-East Asia to support decision-making, and supported Nepal in developing a comprehensive and integrated action plan for the Bagmati River. Through the Africa-Asia project on vulnerability assessment of freshwater resources to environmental change, UNEP examined integrated impacts of potential environmental changes on water resources. The Global Environment Monitoring System Water Programme network grew to more than 3,100 stations with more than 4 million data points. In follow-up to the Sudan post-conflict assessment [YUN 2007, p. 1052] on freshwater, UNEP was providing technical advice on sustainable groundwater extraction in camps for internally displaced persons, and supporting the re-establishment of the water governance framework at the state level with its integrated water resources management project. UNEP and the World Glacier Monitoring Service jointly launched the report *Global Glacier Changes: Facts and Figures* at the twenty-ninth session of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (Geneva, 1 September) (see p. 1164).

The management component of the water policy and strategy followed the three integrated water resources management pillars: strengthening the enabling environment; strengthening institutional functions; and improving access to management instruments. UNEP conducted a survey on integrated water resources management planning to support the international community in monitoring the development of the integrated water resources management plans. The results provided the basis of the *UN-Water Status Report on Integrated Water Resources Management and Water Efficiency Plans*, presented to the Commission on Sustainable Development at its sixteenth (2008) session (see p. 915). As a strategic partner of the African Union (AU) Commission and the African Ministers' Council on Water, UNEP provided technical support and policy advice in the preparatory process of the eleventh AU summit (Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, 24 June–1 July), which focused on accelerating progress toward the 2015 Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets on water and sanitation. UNEP provided technical support to the African Ministers' Council on Water in the implementation of key regional initiatives, including the rural water supply and sanitation initiative; the programme on water and sanitation for African cities; the integrated water resources management initiative; and the networking of water basin organizations and transboundary water initiatives.

The UN mechanism for inter-agency coordination on water resources improved cooperation between UN agencies. During the 2007–2008 period, UNEP clarified its priorities, which were based on its 2010–2013 medium-term strategy (see p. 1153). As a result, the water policy and strategy would be implemented through the six cross-cutting thematic priority areas, which comprised the six sub-programmes in the 2010–2011 programme of work. Gender equality and equity would be integrated in all activities.

A December note by the Executive Director [UNEP/GC.25/INF/31] summarized major outputs and results from the implementation of the UNEP water policy and strategy.

Environment and sustainable development

The Commission on Sustainable Development, at its sixteenth session (New York, 5–16 May) [E/2008/29], considered, for its 2008–2009 implementation cycle, the thematic cluster issues of agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa (see p. 1166). The Commission had before it reports of the Secretary-General on the review of implementation of Agenda 21 [YUN 1992, p. 672] and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation [YUN 2002,

p. 822] with regard to drought [E/CN.17/2008/6] and desertification [E/CN.17/2008/7]; the integrated review [E/CN.17/2008/9] of the thematic cluster of agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa in small island developing States (see below); and the review [E/CN.17/2008/11] of progress in implementing the 2005 Commission decision [YUN 2005, p. 1130] on water and sanitation (see p. 1139).

Small island developing States

In October [UNEP/GC.25/6], the Executive Director submitted a report reviewing progress made in implementing a 2007 Governing Council decision on small island developing States (SIDS) [YUN 2007, p. 1050]. UNEP undertook activities aimed mainly at supporting SIDS in the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States [YUN 2005, p. 946], following the tailored and regional approach called for in a 2005 Council decision [ibid., p. 1138]. UNEP was implementing a Global Environment Facility-funded project on coastal resilience to climate change for assessing vulnerability and adaptation of mangroves and associated ecosystems. It implemented projects on integrating the management of watersheds and coastal areas in Caribbean SIDS—supporting 13 such States—and on sustainable integrated water resource and wastewater management in the Pacific Island countries—supporting 14 SIDS. Projects related to the recovery and recycling of ozone-depleting substances were under way in all regions, benefitting 9 Pacific, 14 Caribbean and 6 Atlantic and Indian Ocean SIDS. UNEP was supporting financially and technically the assessment of the economic, social and environmental impacts of trade-related policies in the agricultural sector, focusing on biodiversity impacts. It was implementing a regional project demonstrating and capturing best practices and technologies for the reduction of land-sourced impacts of coastal tourism. The report described UNEP activities according to the thematic areas outlined in the Mauritius Strategy, including activities related to climate change and sea-level rise; natural and environmental disasters; waste management; coastal and marine resources; freshwater, land, energy, tourism and biodiversity resources; science and technology; sustainable capacity development and education for sustainable development; sustainable production and consumption; national and regional enabling environments; knowledge management and information for decision-making; and South-South cooperation. The report also provided information on specific UNEP actions in Caribbean and Pacific SIDS. An October note by the Executive Director [UNEP/

GC.25/INF/18] provided additional information on the activities covered in the report.

Reports of Secretary-General. In February, the Secretary-General issued a report [E/CN.17/2008/9] on the integrated review of the thematic cluster of agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa in SIDS, which described the continuing challenges faced by SIDS in their effort to advance implementation of the Mauritius Strategy.

In a report issued in August [A/63/296], the Secretary-General reviewed efforts of the UN system, the international community and SIDS to operationalize the Mauritius Strategy, and described initiatives to promote the integration of the Strategy in the sustainable development plans of SIDS.

(For further information on the sustainable development of SIDS, see p. 945).

South-South cooperation

In response to a 2007 Governing Council decision [YUN 2007, p. 1050], the Executive Director in October submitted a report [UNEP/GC.25/8] which summarized UNEP activities to promote South-South cooperation for sustainable development and outlined planned activities. The Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building, adopted by the Council in 2005 [YUN 2005, p. 1135] established South-South cooperation as a key mechanism for implementing the Plan. In response to the Council's 2007 decision, UNEP adopted a strategic approach that focused on conducting internal and external consultations to advance the integration of South-South cooperation into its work, and in developing partnerships and alliances in support of its capacity-building and technology support activities. A major component of the approach comprised promoting the application of a comprehensive set of strategic and operational guidelines, which served as the reference document for guiding the integration of South-South cooperation into existing and proposed activities. Other key components included further developing and refining the guidelines; holding consultations with UNEP divisions to promote the application of the guidelines and the integration of South-specific approaches in the capacity-building activities of the divisions; consulting with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) special unit for South-South cooperation, other UN agencies, multilateral environmental agreement secretariats, regional cooperation mechanisms and South-South cooperation initiatives to establish strategic partnerships and develop joint activities; coordinating the development of a clearing-house mechanism for South-South cooperation; and developing and implementing effective outreach. The report described key UNEP activities and achieve-

ments related to South-South cooperation, including technical training and capacity-building. The implementation of South-South cooperation faced challenges related to internal funding support; the lack of a systematic approach to UNEP capacity-building activities; matching expertise to expressed needs; and effective outreach and related promotional impacts.

An October note by the Executive Director [UNEP/GC.25/INF/19] detailed other South-South cooperation activities implemented by UNEP.

(For further information on South-South cooperation, see p. 988.)

Sustainable development of the Arctic region

On 22 February, the Governing Council adopted a decision on the sustainable development of the Arctic region [dec. SS.X/2]. Recalling its 2003 decision on the topic [YUN 2003, p. 1042], and expressing its concern over the impact of climate change on the polar regions, the Council urged the Governments of Arctic States and other stakeholders to continue to apply the precautionary approach as set forth in principle 15 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development [YUN 1992, p. 671], adopted at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development [ibid., p. 670], in connection with their activities potentially affecting the Arctic environment, including its biodiversity; and to continue to conduct environmental impact assessments. It requested Governments, together with the International Council for Science and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the sponsoring agencies of the International Polar Year 2007–2008, and other bodies, including UNEP and the Arctic Council, to enhance the scientific basis for informed decision-making by promoting international scientific collaboration and coordination to better track, understand and predict Arctic change as a key International Polar Year legacy activity. It also requested the Governments of Arctic States and other stakeholders to implement measures to facilitate adaptation to climate change at all levels, including by indigenous and other communities. UNEP was encouraged to join with other organizations and programmes to seek means to sustain and enhance Arctic observing networks beyond the Year's research phase.

Coordination and cooperation

Environmental emergencies

In 2008, UNEP continued to assist vulnerable or crisis-affected countries and communities by providing environmental expertise for assessments, and integrating environmental concerns in emergency re-

sponse, post-crisis reconstruction, recovery projects, and long-term sustainable development.

On 12 May, an 8.0 magnitude earthquake struck the Sichuan Province of China, affecting approximately 70 million people. As at December, the death toll had reached more than 100,000; more than 374,643 were injured and 17,923 were missing. As the primary international environmental actor on the ground, UNEP coordinated the environmental response to the earthquake. It provided rapid assessment and advisory support for the prevention and control of secondary disasters and assisted the Chinese Government in integrating environmental considerations into long-term recovery and reconstruction. UNEP strengthened its office in Beijing with technical experts in domestic, industrial and hazardous waste management, enabling UNEP to provide environmental expertise to the UN country team and Chinese authorities. At China's request, UNEP facilitated training workshops on post-disaster environmental management for Chinese civil servants, environmental experts, Government representatives and Beijing-based international organizations.

In Myanmar, UNEP supported the environmental recovery from the impact of Cyclone Nargis, which struck the country on 2 May. The cyclone affected an estimated 2.4 million people; official figures indicated that more than 77,000 people were killed and almost 56,000 were missing. From 16 to 21 May the Joint Environment Unit of UNEP and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) conducted an assessment of the immediate risks stemming from environmental damage, following which UNEP deployed an environmental expert to work on the UN disaster recovery programme as part of the country team. The Joint Unit and its partners responded to several other events, such as the environmental impact of Hurricane Ike, which affected the Turks and Caicos Islands in September; toxic pesticides carried aboard a capsized ferry in the Philippines in June; and landslides triggered by heavy rainfall in Honduras in September and October.

In cooperation with the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, UNEP established the Partnership for Environment and Disaster Reduction to advance an integrated approach to climate change, disaster reduction and ecosystem services.

Oil slick in Lebanon

In August [A/63/225], the Secretary-General reported on progress in implementing General Assembly resolutions 61/194 [YUN 2006, p. 1215] and 62/188 [YUN 2007, p. 1053] related to the oil slick on Lebanese shores that resulted from the 2006 destruction by

Israel of oil storage tanks in Lebanon following the outbreak of hostilities between Israel and the paramilitary group Hizbullah [YUN 2006, p. 574]. The release of 15,000 tons of fuel oil into the Mediterranean Sea led to the contamination of 150 kilometre of coastline in Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic. The report reiterated and updated the overall assessment, presented in the Secretary-General's 2006 report on the issue [ibid., p. 1052], of the impact of the oil spill on human health, biodiversity, fisheries and tourism, and the implications for livelihoods and the economy of Lebanon. It also reviewed progress made in cleaning up and rehabilitating Lebanon's polluted shores and sea.

The Secretary-General noted that Israel had yet to assume responsibility for providing compensation to the Government of Lebanon and other countries for the costs of repairing the environmental damage caused by the destruction of the oil storage tanks, including the restoration of the marine environment, as called for in resolutions 61/194 and 62/188. A response in that regard was formally sought by the UNEP Post-Conflict and Disaster Management Branch in a letter of 16 August 2007 to the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations Office at Geneva, and in a further letter of 5 June 2008 from the UNEP Executive Director to the Permanent Representative of Israel to UNEP. No response to either communication had been received.

By June 2008, approximately 500 cubic meters of liquid and 3,120 cubic meters of semi-solid and solid waste had been collected during a two-phase clean-up operation implemented by the Lebanese Ministry of the Environment in partnership with several Member States and organizations. As at June 2008, total financial assistance received by Lebanon in support of its clean-up efforts amounted to about 10 per cent of the average upper limit range of between \$137 million and \$205 million, as recommended by the Experts Working Group for Lebanon, and about 24 per cent of the minimum value of \$77.8 million. No progress was made towards creating an eastern Mediterranean oil spill restoration fund, as called for in resolution 62/188.

The Secretary-General urged Member States, international organizations, international and regional financial institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector to continue their support for Lebanon in addressing the impact of the oil spill, in particular for rehabilitation activities on the Lebanese coast, as well as in the broader recovery effort. The international effort should be intensified, as Lebanon was still engaged in oil removal, waste treatment and recovery monitoring. The spill was not covered by any of the international oil-spill compensation funds and thus merited special consideration. In that context, the Secretary-General recommended

establishing the eastern Mediterranean oil spill restoration fund.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 19 December [meeting 72], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Second Committee [A/63/414 & Corr.1], adopted **resolution 63/211** by recorded vote (165-7-2) [agenda item 49].

Oil slick on Lebanese shores

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 61/194 of 20 December 2006 and 62/188 of 19 December 2007 on the oil slick on Lebanese shores,

Reaffirming the outcome of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, especially principle 7 of the Declaration of the Conference, in which States were requested to take all possible steps to prevent pollution of the seas,

Emphasizing the need to protect and preserve the marine environment in accordance with international law,

Taking into account the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, especially principle 16, in which it was stipulated that the polluter should, in principle, bear the cost of pollution, and taking into account also chapter 17 of Agenda 21,

Noting again with great concern the environmental disaster caused by the destruction by the Israeli Air Force on 15 July 2006 of the oil storage tanks in the direct vicinity of El-Jiyeh electric power plant in Lebanon, resulting in an oil slick that covered the entirety of the Lebanese coastline and extended to the Syrian coastline,

Noting again with appreciation the assistance offered by donor countries and international organizations for the early recovery and reconstruction of Lebanon through bilateral and multilateral channels, including the Athens Coordination Meeting on the response to the marine pollution incident in the Eastern Mediterranean, held on 17 August 2006, as well as the Stockholm Conference for Lebanon's Early Recovery, held on 31 August 2006,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 62/188 on the oil slick on Lebanese shores;

2. *Reiterates the expression of its deep concern* about the adverse implications of the destruction by the Israeli Air Force of the oil storage tanks in the direct vicinity of the Lebanese El-Jiyeh electric power plant for the achievement of sustainable development in Lebanon;

3. *Considers* that the oil slick has heavily polluted the shores of Lebanon and partially polluted Syrian shores and consequently has had serious implications for livelihoods and the economy of Lebanon, owing to the adverse implications for natural resources, biodiversity, fisheries and tourism, and for human health, in the country;

4. *Requests* the Government of Israel to assume responsibility for prompt and adequate compensation to the Government of Lebanon and other countries directly affected by the oil slick, such as the Syrian Arab Republic whose shores have been partially polluted, for the costs

of repairing the environmental damage caused by the destruction, including the restoration of the marine environment;

5. *Expresses its appreciation* for the efforts of the Government of Lebanon and those of the Member States, regional and international organizations, regional and international financial institutions, non-governmental organizations and the private sector in the initiation of clean-up and rehabilitation operations on the polluted shores, and encourages the Member States and above-mentioned entities to continue their financial and technical support to the Government of Lebanon towards achieving the completion of clean-up and rehabilitation operations, with the aim of preserving the ecosystem of Lebanon and that of the Eastern Mediterranean Basin;

6. *Decides* to establish an Eastern Mediterranean Oil Spill Restoration Trust Fund, based on voluntary contributions, to provide assistance and support to the States directly adversely affected in their integrated environmentally sound management, from clean-up to safe disposal of oily waste, of this environmental disaster resulting from the destruction of the oil storage tanks at El-Jiyeh electric power plant, and requests the Secretary-General to implement this decision before the end of the sixty-third session of the General Assembly;

7. *Invites* States, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and the private sector to make voluntary financial contributions to the Trust Fund, and, in this regard, requests the Secretary-General to mobilize international technical and financial assistance in order to ensure that the Trust Fund has sufficient and adequate resources;

8. *Recognizes* the multidimensionality of the adverse impact of the oil slick, and requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution under the item entitled “Sustainable development”.

RECORDED VOTE ON RESOLUTION 63/211:

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, China, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Moldova, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia,

Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against: Australia, Canada, Israel, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, United States.

Abstaining: Cameroon, Colombia.

Memorandums of understanding

A December note by the Executive Director [UNEP/GC.25/INF/8] summarized the two memorandums of understanding (MOUs) concluded between UNEP and other UN bodies since his last report on the subject [YUN 2006, p. 1216]. In June, UNEP signed a corporate MOU with the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) that covered projects implemented from 1 July; it would remain in effect until 31 December 2011. In December, UNEP concluded an MOU with UNDP under which the two Programmes would cooperate in areas of common interest, including climate change, the Poverty and Environment Initiative and other environmental endeavours.

Participation of civil society

The ninth Global Civil Society Forum (Monaco, 19 February) [UNEP/GCSF/9/1] discussed civil society engagement during the tenth (2008) GC/GMEF special session; guidelines for improving the Forum cycle; globalization and the environment: mobilizing finance to meet the climate challenge; and the UNEP Medium-term Strategy 2010–2013 (see p. 1153). A dialogue was held between Forum participants and the UNEP Executive Director.

A note by the Executive Director [UNEP/GCSS.X/INF/5] contained regional civil society statements to the tenth (2008) special session of the Governing Council.

In response to a 2003 Governing Council decision [YUN 2003, p. 1046], the Executive Director in October submitted a report [UNEP/GC.25/10] presenting the final review of the first UNEP long-term Tunza strategy (2003–2008) for the engagement of and involvement of young people in environmental issues [YUN 2002, p. 1040] as well as the proposed second long-term strategy (2009–2014). Under the first Tunza strategy, UNEP established regional and sub-regional environmental networks and organized 13 conferences and workshops annually for young people. Through the networks, UNEP was able to reach out with environmental information to over 30,000 young people's organizations. UNEP organized six Tunza international conferences between 2003 and

2008 and published 23 issues of *Tunza* magazine. The 2008 Tunza International Children's Conference was held in Stavanger, Norway, from 17 to 21 June. UNEP also facilitated and supported the participation of young leaders in GC/GMEF and the Global Civil Society Forum, meetings of conferences of the parties to environmental conventions and other international environmental discussions. The lack of adequate financial and human resources greatly limited UNEP work with young people. Nevertheless, the Tunza programme was able to achieve most of its planned activities for the first strategy through private sector funding. UNEP received substantial funding for the Tunza programme from the Bayer company, which provided €1 million annually from 2004 to 2007 and €1.2 million in 2008 to support children and youth in environmental activities. The main challenge for UNEP in its work with young people was the lack of access to environmental information at the national level. An October note by the Executive Director [UNEP/GC.25/INF/17] reviewed the implementation of the first Tunza strategy.

The proposed 2009–2014 strategy was developed in line with the recommendations from the midterm independent evaluation of the first strategy, released in 2006 [YUN 2006, p. 1216], and received inputs from children and young people's focal points in UNEP divisions and regional offices, partner organizations, the Tunza Youth Advisory Council and Junior Board, participants in the 2008 Tunza International Conference and others. Under the overall Tunza concept, the second strategy was designed to increase the participation of young people in environmental issues. It sought to promote a global movement through which children and young people would engage in environmental activities and influence politicians, leaders and society to make environmental changes. The second strategy also sought to enhance, inspire and enable the involvement of children and young people in sustainable development, particularly in the six thematic priorities identified in the UNEP medium-term strategy for the 2010–2013 period.

Cooperation with UN-Habitat

The Governing Council considered a note by the Executive Director [UNEP/GC.25/INF/10], which contained the joint report of the Executive Directors of UNEP and UN-Habitat on progress made in the 2007–2008 period to strengthen cooperation between the Programmes. Cooperation between UNEP and UN-Habitat was expanded and institutionalized. The Partnership Framework 2008–2013 was adopted by the senior management of both Programmes. A joint implementation plan for 2008–2009 focused on: cities and climate change, with a special focus on Africa; the Global Alliance for Ecomobility, a part-

nership aimed at reducing people's dependency on private automobiles; integrated waste management; city biodiversity and ecosystems; and joint outreach activities. The overall goal of cooperation between UNEP and UN-Habitat was to integrate the environmental perspective into local, national and global urban policymaking; incorporate urban perspectives into environmental policymaking; and highlight the local-global linkages of environmental issues.

General Assembly issues

The Executive Director in February provided information on issues arising from resolutions adopted by the General Assembly in 2007 that called for action by, or were of relevance to, UNEP [UNEP/GCSS.X/INF/3].

Administrative and budgetary matters

Budget execution

A February note by the Executive Director [UNEP/GCSS.X/INF/4] contained information on the execution of the UNEP 2006–2007 biennial budget. Total provisional resources for the biennium, including the UN regular budget, the Environment Fund, trust funds, earmarked contributions and trust fund support, amounted to \$414.4 million, including a balance as at 1 January 2006 of \$90.5 million. Total claims on resources were estimated at \$303 million. The estimated total year-end balance of funds as at 31 December 2007 was projected to be \$111.4 million.

Board of Auditors report

A note by the Executive Director [UNEP/GC/25/INF/6] contained the report of the Board of Auditors, which included the financial report and audited financial statements of UNEP for the biennium ended 31 December 2007 [A/63/5/Add.6]. UNEP financial statements covered the major funds, including the Environment Fund, general trust funds, the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, technical cooperation trust funds and other trust funds. The Environment Fund reported a total income of \$122 million in 2006–2007, \$6 million for the Fund's programme reserve activities and \$16 million for its biennial support budget. The total approved programme budget for the biennium was \$144 million. Resources were shifted from contractual services to cover increased staffing costs in order to meet the commitments of the Environment Fund within the projected funding. On 31 December 2007, contributions represented \$2.3 million for the Environment Fund and \$18.5 million for all general trust funds.

At the end of the biennium, there was a net excess of income over expenditure before adjustments of \$36.8 million as compared to \$8.3 million in 2004–2005. Contributions to technical cooperation trust funds, earmarked contributions and Professional Officer trust funds were accounted for when received in cash. Overall, total reserves and fund balances decreased by \$4 million (1.7 per cent) to \$237.4 million. That was mainly due to non-budgeted expenditure in respect of the accrual of end-of-service benefits. The Multilateral Fund reported a net deficit of \$37.7 million, while in 2004–2005, the deficit amounted to \$44.6 million. Nevertheless, the Fund's financial statements showed a positive total reserves and fund balances of \$480.5 million as at 31 December 2007.

The Board made recommendations relating to travel costs; the level of UNEP liquidity and the progress of its projects; liabilities for end-of-service and post-retirement benefits, particularly health insurance; disclosure of financial statements received from the regular budget and the related expenditure and regarding advances paid to implementing partners; the establishment of a working group for both the International Public Sector Accounting Standards and the enterprise resource planning system; the review of its service agreement with the United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON); improvement of its internal control procedures; payment of long-outstanding contributions to multilateral environment agreements; justification of the amount of non-expendable property disclosed in the financial statements; and options for reducing the manual processing of financial statements to a minimum.

Medium-term Strategy (2010–2013)

In response to a 2007 Governing Council decision [YUN 2007, p. 1057], the Executive Director developed the proposed UNEP Medium-term Strategy for 2010–2013, which was outlined in a note by the Executive Director [UNEP/GCSS.X/8]. The Strategy set out the vision and strategic direction for UNEP activities for the 2010–2013 period, including results to be delivered through the UNEP biennial programmes of work for 2010–2011 and 2012–2013; the UNEP GEF portfolio for 2010–2014; and UNEP earmarked contributions. For the 2010–2013 period, UNEP would focus on exercising environmental leadership on six cross-cutting thematic priorities: climate change; disasters and conflicts; ecosystem management; environmental governance; harmful substances and hazardous waste; and resource efficiency, sustainable consumption and production. Each priority included an objective and expected accomplishments. In line with the priorities, UNEP objectives under the Medium-term Strategy were to: strengthen the ability of countries to integrate climate change responses into

national development processes; minimize environmental threats to human well-being from the environmental causes and consequences of conflicts and disasters; ensure that countries utilized the ecosystem approach to enhance human well-being; ensure that environmental governance at the country, regional and global levels was strengthened to address agreed environmental priorities; minimize the impact of harmful substances and hazardous waste on the environment and human beings; and ensure that natural resources were produced, processed and consumed in a more environmentally sustainable way. The vision for the medium-term was for UNEP to set the global environmental agenda; promote the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the UN system; and serve as an authoritative advocate for the global environment. The Strategy was developed by UNEP in consultation with the Committee of Permanent Representatives, the secretariats of UNEP-administered multilateral environmental agreements, and representatives of civil society and the private sector. Its priorities emerged from a review of scientific evidence; the comparative advantage and mandate of UNEP; priorities emerging from global and regional forums; and an assessment of areas in which UNEP could make a transformative difference. UNEP would monitor progress against the objectives and expected accomplishments contained in the Strategy and programmes of work, and would report to the Committee of Permanent Representatives every six months.

On 22 February [dec. SS.X/3], the Governing Council authorized the Executive Director to use the Medium-term Strategy 2010–2013 in formulating the strategic frameworks and programmes of work and budgets for 2010–2011 and for 2012–2013, and as a means to encourage coordination among UNEP divisions. It noted that any budgetary issues arising from the Medium-term Strategy would be addressed through the programmes of work and budgets for 2010–2011 and 2012–2013 that would be approved by the Council. The Executive Director was encouraged to strengthen results-based management in UNEP and, working within the approved programme of work for 2008–2009, use that period to begin the transition to a fully results-based organization. The Council requested the Executive Director to inform Governments about the implementation of the Medium-term Strategy 2010–2013 at regular intervals and to submit to the Council in 2011 a progress report on implementation.

The Strategy's six thematic cross-cutting priorities constituted the six proposed subprogrammes of the proposed UN strategic framework for the period 2010–2011 for programme 11, Environment, which was submitted to the General Assembly in March [A/63/6(Prog.11)]. The forty-eighth session of the Com-

mittee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) (New York, 9 June–3 July) [A/63/16] (see p. 1527) recommended that the General Assembly approve the narrative of programme 11. The Assembly, in **resolution 63/247** of 24 December (see p. 1563), endorsed the Committee's recommendations.

Global Environment Facility

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) was established in 1991 as a joint programme of UNDP, UNEP and the World Bank [YUN 1991, p. 505] to help solve global and environmental problems. In 2008, GEF united 178 member Governments—in partnership with international institutions, NGOs and the private sector—to address global environmental issues. An independent financial organization, GEF provided grants to developing countries and countries with economies in transition for projects related to biodiversity, climate change, international waters, land degradation, the ozone layer and persistent organic pollutants (POPs). The GEF partnership included 10 agencies: UNDP, UNEP, the World Bank, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Inter-American Development Bank and the International Fund for Agricultural Development. GEF functioned as the financial mechanism for the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity [YUN 1992, p. 683] (see p. 1158), the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change [ibid., p. 681] (see p. 1155), the 1994 United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa [YUN 1994, p. 944] (see p. 1161) and the 2001 Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants [YUN 2001, p. 971] (see p. 1173).

From 1 July 2007 to 20 June 2008, GEF financed 185 projects worth \$4.05 billion, investing \$634 million in GEF resources and mobilizing \$3.4 billion in co-financing. Biodiversity accounted for 59 projects, climate change for 33, POPs for 23, international waters for 22, land degradation for 10, and ozone depletion for 1, in addition to 37 multi-focal area projects.

During the reporting period, the GEF Council approved 33 new projects in the climate change focal area; total GEF allocation was approximately \$154 million, supplemented by an additional \$1.2 billion generated in co-financing from partners, including the GEF agencies, bilateral agencies, recipient countries, NGOs and the private sector. The Council approved 59 new projects in the area of biological diversity and biosafety, with grants totalling approximately \$154

million, supplemented by an additional \$734 million generated in co-financing from partners. Twenty-three new projects were approved in the POPs focal area; total GEF allocation was approximately \$86.7 million, supplemented by an additional \$191.8 million in co-financing. A medium-sized project in the ozone depletion focal area was approved, with an allocation of \$740,000, supplemented by an additional \$500,000 in co-financing. The Council approved 10 new projects in the land degradation focal area, with an allocation of approximately \$15.8 million, supplemented by an additional \$53.1 million in co-financing. Thirty new projects were approved in the area of sustainable forest management, with allocations of \$135 million, supplemented by an additional \$659 million in co-financing. In the area of sustainable land management, 19 new projects were approved, with an allocation of \$55 million and an expected additional \$514 million generated in co-financing. The Council approved 22 new projects in the international waters focal area, with an allocation of \$93.5 million, supplemented by an additional \$594.8 million in co-financing. Six multi-focal area projects with strong international waters components were also approved.

The UNDP-administered Small Grants Programme during that period provided grants of up to \$50,000 to finance 1,191 projects executed by community-based organizations, indigenous people's organizations, NGOs and others. Total new GEF allocation was approximately \$35.36 million, supplemented by cash and in-kind co-financing.

International conventions and mechanisms

In response to General Assembly resolutions 62/86 [YUN 2007, p. 1060], 62/193 [ibid., p. 1065] and 62/194 [ibid., p. 1063], the Secretary-General, by an August note [A/63/294], transmitted reports submitted by the secretariats of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (see p. 1155), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (see p. 1161) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (see p. 1158), respectively.

A November report by the UNEP Executive Director [UNEP/GC.25/3] discussed issues concerning multilateral environmental agreements. The UNEP multilateral environmental agreements management team met in April to enhance effective administration and communication and ensure greater cohesion in tackling substantive issues of common interest among UNEP and UNEP-administered multilateral environmental agreements. The Ad Hoc Joint Working Group on Enhancing Cooperation and Coordination

Among the 1989 Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal [YUN 1989, p. 420], the 1998 Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade [YUN 1998, p. 997] and the 2001 Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants [YUN 2001, p. 971] met three times since March 2007 and concluded its work at its third meeting (Rome, 25–28 March) [UNEP/FAO/CHW/RC/POPS/JWG.3/3]. It adopted a set of recommendations that identified the general direction and practical course of action for the three Conferences of the Parties to improve cooperation and coordination, enhance implementation of the Conventions and improve effectiveness and efficiency in administering the Conventions through joint arrangements and services. It was also recommended that simultaneous extraordinary meetings of the Conferences of the Parties to the Conventions should be held in conjunction with the eleventh (2010) special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum. The ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention (see p. 1173) and the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention (see p. 1170) adopted the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Joint Working Group.

A December note by the UNEP secretariat [UNEP/GC.25/INF/16] contained a preliminary compilation of internationally agreed environmental goals and objectives that were drawn from the outcome documents of relevant UN summits and conferences, General Assembly resolutions, decisions of other global intergovernmental conferences, multilateral environmental agreements and decisions of their governing bodies.

A December note by the Executive Director [UNEP/GC.25/INF/16/Add.1] on efforts to meet internationally agreed environmental goals and objectives presented highlights of a preliminary study of demands and outputs of selected multilateral environmental agreements from 1992 to 2007. The note provided information on ratification of agreements, institutional arrangements, the number of meetings held, decisions taken by governing bodies, and budgets for the agreements.

Climate change convention

As at 31 December, 191 States and the European Union (EU) were parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which was opened for signature in 1992 [YUN 1992, p. 681] and entered into force in 1994 [YUN 1994, p. 938].

At year's end, 183 States and the EU were parties to the Kyoto Protocol to the Convention [YUN 1997, p. 1048], which entered into force in 2005 [YUN 2005, p. 1146]. There were 11 Parties to the 2006 amendment to annex B of the Protocol [YUN 2006, p. 1220], which had not yet entered into force.

The fourteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to UNFCCC (Poznań, Poland, 1–12 December) [FCCC/CP/2008/7 & Add.1] decided to continue the pilot phase for activities implemented jointly by developed country parties and other parties included in annex I of the Convention to reduce greenhouse gases or enhance their removal. It also adopted decisions on advancing the Bali Action Plan, launched in 2007 [YUN 2007, p. 1060] to enable implementation of the Convention through long-term, cooperative action up to and beyond 2012; the development and transfer of environmentally sound technologies; the fourth review of the Convention's financial mechanism; additional guidance to GEF; further guidance for the operation of the Least Developed Countries Fund; capacity-building for developing countries under the Convention; and administrative and financial matters.

The fourth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the parties to the Kyoto Protocol, held concurrently with the fourteenth UNFCCC Conference session [FCCC/KP/CMP/2008/11 & Add.1], adopted decisions related to the Adaptation Fund; further guidance relating to the clean development mechanism; advancing the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for annex I parties under the Protocol; the work of the Compliance Committee; guidance on implementation of article 6 of the Protocol; capacity-building for developing countries; privileges and immunities for individuals serving on constituted bodies established under the Protocol; and administrative and financial matters.

In November, the Executive Board of the Protocol's clean development mechanism issued its annual report [FCCC/KP/CMP/2008/4], covering its work from 20 October 2007 to 24 October 2008.

In 2008, the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) [FCCC/SBSTA/2008/6] and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) [FCCC/SBI/2008/8 & Add.1] held their twenty-eighth sessions (Bonn, Germany, 4–13 June). SBSTA [FCCC/SBSTA/2008/13] and SBI [FCCC/SBI/2008/19] also held their twenty-ninth sessions (Poznań, 1–10 December).

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 26 November [meeting 60], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Second Committee [A/63/414/Add.4], adopted **resolution 63/32** without vote [agenda item 49 (d)].

Protection of global climate for present and future generations

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 43/53 of 6 December 1988, 54/222 of 22 December 1999, 61/201 of 20 December 2006 and 62/86 of 10 December 2007 and other resolutions and decisions relating to the protection of the global climate for present and future generations of mankind,

Recalling also the provisions of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, including the acknowledgement that the global nature of climate change calls for the widest possible cooperation by all countries and their participation in an effective and appropriate international response, in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities and their social and economic conditions,

Recalling further the United Nations Millennium Declaration, in which Heads of State and Government resolved to make every effort to ensure the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol and to embark on the required reduction in emissions of greenhouse gases,

Recalling the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development, the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (“Johannesburg Plan of Implementation”), the outcome of the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and the third session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, held in Bali, Indonesia, from 3 to 15 December 2007, and the outcomes of all previous sessions,

Reaffirming the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, the Mauritius Declaration and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,

Recalling the 2005 World Summit Outcome,

Remaining deeply concerned that all countries, in particular developing countries, including the least developed countries and small island developing States, face increased risks from the negative effects of climate change, and stressing the need to address adaptation needs relating to such effects,

Noting that, to date, there are one hundred and ninety-two parties to the Convention, including one hundred and ninety-one States and one regional economic integration organization,

Noting also that, currently, the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change has attracted one hundred and eighty-three ratifications, accessions, acceptances or approvals, including by thirty-nine parties included in annex I to the Convention,

Noting further the amendment to annex B to the Kyoto Protocol,

Noting the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the need to build and enhance scientific and technological capabilities, inter alia, through continuing support to the Panel for the exchange of scientific data and information, especially in developing countries,

Noting also the significance of the scientific findings of the fourth assessment report of the Intergovernmental

Panel on Climate Change, providing an integrated scientific, technical and socio-economic perspective on relevant issues and contributing positively to the discussions under the Convention and the understanding of the phenomenon of climate change, including its impacts and risks,

Reaffirming that economic and social development and poverty eradication are global priorities,

Recognizing that deep cuts in global emissions will be required to achieve the ultimate objective of the Convention,

Reaffirming its commitment to the ultimate objective of the Convention, namely, to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that prevents dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system,

Noting with appreciation the efforts of the Secretary-General in raising awareness of the need to respond to the global challenge of climate change,

Taking note of the Beijing High-level Conference on Climate Change: Technology Development and Technology Transfer, held in Beijing on 7 and 8 November 2008, and the third World Climate Conference on the theme “Climate prediction and information for decision-making”, to be held in Geneva from 31 August to 4 September 2009,

Acknowledging women as key actors in the efforts towards sustainable development, and recognizing that a gender perspective can contribute to efforts to address climate change,

Taking note of the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,

1. *Stresses* the seriousness of climate change, and calls upon States to work cooperatively towards achieving the ultimate objective of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change through the urgent implementation of its provisions;

2. *Urges* parties to the Convention, and invites parties to the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to continue to make use of the information contained in the fourth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in their work;

3. *Notes* that States that have ratified the Kyoto Protocol welcome the entry into force of the Protocol on 16 February 2005 and strongly urge States that have not yet done so to ratify it in a timely manner;

4. *Takes note* of the outcome of the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and the third session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, hosted by the Government of Indonesia from 3 to 15 December 2007;

5. *Welcomes* the decisions adopted during the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, including the Bali Action Plan, by which the Conference of the Parties decided to launch a comprehensive process aimed at enabling the full, effective and sustained implementation of the Convention through long-term cooperative action, now, up to and beyond 2012, in order to reach an agreed outcome and adopt a decision at the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties, and takes note of the work under way in the open-ended ad hoc working group of parties to the Kyoto Protocol established under decision 1/CMP.1;

6. *Notes* that States that have ratified the Kyoto Protocol welcome the launch of the Adaptation Fund during the third session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, and notes also that developing-country parties to the Kyoto Protocol that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change are eligible for funding from the Adaptation Fund to assist them in meeting the costs of adaptation and look forward to its early operationalization;

7. *Takes note with appreciation* of the offer of the Government of Poland to host the fourteenth session of the Conference of the Parties and the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, to be held in Poznań, from 1 to 12 December 2008, and looks forward to a successful outcome, including advancement towards an agreed outcome in 2009;

8. *Also takes note with appreciation*, in this regard, of the offer of the Government of Denmark to host the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties and the fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, to be held in Copenhagen from 30 November to 11 December 2009;

9. *Recognizes* that climate change poses serious risks and challenges to all countries, particularly to developing countries, especially the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and countries in Africa, including those that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, and calls upon States to take urgent global action to address climate change in accordance with the principles identified in the Convention, including the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, and, in this regard, urges all countries to fully implement their commitments under the Convention, to take effective and concrete actions and measures at all levels, and to enhance international cooperation in the framework of the Convention;

10. *Reaffirms* that efforts to address climate change in a manner that enhances the sustainable development and sustained economic growth of the developing countries and the eradication of poverty should be carried out through promoting the integration of the three components of sustainable development, namely, economic development, social development and environmental protection, as interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars, in an integrated, coordinated and balanced manner;

11. *Recognizes* the need to provide financial and technical resources, as well as capacity-building and access to and transfer of technology, to assist those developing countries adversely affected by climate change;

12. *Calls upon* the international community to fulfil the commitments made during the fourth replenishment of the Global Environment Facility Trust Fund;

13. *Notes* the ongoing work of the liaison group of the secretariats and offices of the relevant subsidiary bodies of the Framework Convention, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, and the Convention on Biological Diversity, and encourages cooperation to promote complementarities among the three secretariats while respecting their independent legal status;

14. *Invites* the conferences of the parties to the multi-lateral environmental conventions, when setting the dates of their meetings, to take into consideration the schedule of meetings of the General Assembly and the Commission on Sustainable Development so as to ensure the adequate representation of developing countries at those meetings;

15. *Invites* the secretariat of the Framework Convention to report, through the Secretary-General, to the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session on the work of the Conference of the Parties;

16. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-fourth session the sub-item entitled "Protection of global climate for present and future generations".

On 24 December (**decision 63/552**), the General Assembly decided that the agenda item on the protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind would remain for consideration during its resumed sixty-third (2009) session.

Vienna Convention and Montreal Protocol

As at 31 December, 192 States and the EU were parties to the 1985 Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer [YUN 1985, p. 804], which entered into force in 1988 [YUN 1998, p. 810].

Parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, which was adopted in 1987 [YUN 1987, p. 686], numbered 192 States and the EU; to the 1990 Amendment to the Protocol, 188 States and the EU; to the 1992 Amendment, 183 States and the EU; to the 1997 Amendment, 167 States and the EU; and to the 1999 Amendment, 146 States and the EU.

The combined eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Vienna Convention and the twentieth Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol was held in Doha, Qatar, from 16 to 20 November [UNEP/OzL.Conv.8/7-UNEP/OzL.Pro.20/9]. The Conference of the Parties to the Convention approved the revised budget for the Trust Fund for the Vienna Convention for 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011. It endorsed the recommendations adopted by the Ozone Research Managers at their seventh meeting (Geneva, 18–21 May) and adopted decisions on the status of ratification of the Convention and the Montreal Protocol and its Amendments, and other administrative and budgetary matters.

The Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol adopted the Doha Declaration, which addressed the destruction of ozone-depleting substances and other issues. Other decisions related to ratification of the Convention, the Protocol, and amendments to the Protocol; essential-use nominations for parties not operating under article 5 of the Protocol for controlled substances for 2009 and 2010; essential-use exemptions for parties operating under article 5; production of chlorofluorocarbons for metered-dose inhalers; critical-use exemptions for methyl bromide for 2009

and 2010; actions by parties to reduce methyl bromide use for quarantine and pre-shipment purposes and related emissions; the environmentally sound management of banks of ozone-depleting substances; application of the Protocol's trade provisions to hydrochlorofluorocarbons; the 2009–2011 replenishment of the Multilateral Fund; information provided by the parties in accordance with article 7 of the Protocol; reports submitted by parties under article 9; the report on the establishment of licensing systems under article 4B; difficulties faced by Iraq as a new party to the Convention, the Protocol and amendments to the Protocol; a request by Saudi Arabia for a change in baseline data; compliance issues; and administrative and budgetary issues.

The Implementation Committee under the Non-compliance Procedure held its fortieth (Bangkok, Thailand, 2–4 July) [UNEP/OzL.Pro/ImpCom/40/6] and forty-first (Doha, 12–14 November) [UNEP/OzL.Pro/ImpCom/41/8] meetings.

Convention on air pollution

As at 31 December, the number of parties to the 1979 Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution [YUN 1979, p. 710], which entered into force in 1983 [YUN 1983, p. 645] remained at 50 States and the EU. Eight protocols to the Convention dealt with the programme for monitoring and evaluation of pollutants in Europe (1984), the reduction of sulphur emissions or their transboundary fluxes by at least 30 per cent (1985), the control of emissions of nitrogen oxides or their transboundary fluxes (1988), the control of volatile organic compounds or their transboundary fluxes (1991), further reduction of sulphur emissions (1994), heavy metals (1998), persistent organic pollutants (POPs) (1998) and the abatement of acidification, eutrophication and ground-level ozone (1999).

The twenty-sixth session of the Executive Body for the Convention (Geneva, 15–18 December) [ECE/EB.AIR/96 & Add.1, 2] approved guidelines for reporting on the monitoring and modelling of air pollution effects [ECE/EB.AIR/2008/11], which were adopted by the twenty-seventh session of the Working Group on Effects (Geneva, 24–26 September) [ECE/EB.AIR/WG.1/2008/2]. Other decisions dealt with emission data reporting under the Convention and its protocols and compliance issues.

Convention on Biological Diversity

As at 31 December, 190 States and the EU were parties to the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity [YUN 1992, p. 638], which entered into force in 1993 [YUN 1993, p. 210].

At year's end, the number of parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, which was adopted in 2000 [YUN 2000, p. 973] and entered into force in 2003 [YUN 2003, p. 1051], stood at 152 States and the EU.

The thirteenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (Rome, Italy, 18–22 February) [UNEP/CBD/COP/9/3] adopted seven recommendations for consideration by the ninth (2008) meeting (see below) of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention.

The ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Bonn, Germany, 13–30 May) [UNEP/CBD/COP/9/29] adopted a roadmap for negotiating an international regime for access to, and sharing the benefits of, genetic resources. It also adopted scientific criteria for identifying ecologically or biologically significant marine areas in need of protection in open-ocean waters and deep-sea habitats, and the scientific guidance for designing representative networks of marine protected areas. Other Conference decisions related to agricultural biodiversity; plant conservation; alien species that threatened ecosystems; forest biodiversity; incentive measures; the ecosystem approach; the Strategic Plan of the Convention; preparation of the third edition of the *Global Biodiversity Outlook*; implementation of articles 20 and 21 of the Convention; access and benefit-sharing; article 8(j) of the Convention, on traditional knowledge; and technology transfer and cooperation. Further decisions dealt with follow-up to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, which was completed in 2005 [YUN 2005, p. 1154]; biodiversity and climate change; the biodiversity of dry and sub-humid lands; protected areas; inland water ecosystems; marine and coastal biodiversity; island biodiversity; the Global Taxonomy Initiative; liability and redress for damage to biological diversity; the Gender Plan of Action under the Convention; South-South cooperation; business engagement; cooperation among multilateral environmental agreements and other organizations; promoting engagement of cities and local authorities; scientific and technical cooperation; communication, education and public awareness; the International Year of Biodiversity (2010), declared by the General Assembly in resolution 61/203 [YUN 2006, p. 1225]; and administrative and budgetary matters.

Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety

The fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (Bonn, Germany, 12–16 May) [UNEP/CBD/BS/COP-MOP/4/18] approved a revised set of indicators for monitoring the updated Action Plan for Building Capacities for the Effective Implementation of the Protocol and established an Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Risk

Assessment and Risk Management. Other decisions dealt with the Compliance Committee; the Biosafety Clearing-House; the roster of biosafety experts; co-operation with other organizations, conventions and initiatives; the handling, transport, packaging and identification of living modified organisms; liability and redress under the Protocol; the establishment of subsidiary bodies under the Protocol; monitoring and reporting under the Protocol; assessment and review; socio-economic considerations; public awareness, education and participation in the implementation of the Protocol; notification requirements under the Protocol; and financial and budgetary matters.

Intergovernmental meeting. In November [UNEP/GC.25/15], the UNEP Executive Director reported on the ad hoc intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder meeting on an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services (Putrajaya, Malaysia, 10–12 November) that was convened by the Executive Director and hosted by Malaysia. Participants agreed that there was a need to strengthen the science-policy interface and identified the main areas of work for the proposed platform, including early warning and horizon scanning, multi-scale assessments, policy information and capacity-building. UNEP was requested to undertake a preliminary gap analysis for facilitating discussions on strengthening the science-policy interface. The report on the gap analysis would be submitted to GC/GMEF in 2009. The meeting recommended that, subject to a Governing Council decision, the Executive Director convene a second intergovernmental multi-stakeholder meeting on the issue. The summary of the Chair of the meeting was annexed to the report.

In a December note [UNEP/GC.25/INF/32] the Executive Director set out documents submitted to the November meeting, including a revised concept note on the proposed platform; a programme of work and budget for the platform for an initial four-year period; and outlines for a governance structure, secretariat functions and rules and procedures.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 19 December [meeting 72], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Second Committee [A/63/414/Add.6], adopted **resolution 63/219** without vote [agenda item 49 (f)].

Convention on Biological Diversity

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 55/201 of 20 December 2000, 61/204 of 20 December 2006 and 62/194 of 19 December 2007 and other previous resolutions relating to the Convention on Biological Diversity,

Recalling also its resolution 61/203 of 20 December 2006 on the International Year of Biodiversity, 2010,

Reiterating that the Convention on Biological Diversity is the key international instrument for the conservation and sustainable use of biological resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources,

Noting that one hundred and ninety States and one regional economic integration organization have ratified the Convention and that one hundred and forty-seven States and one regional economic integration organization have ratified the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity,

Recalling the commitments of the World Summit on Sustainable Development to pursue a more efficient and coherent implementation of the three objectives of the Convention and the achievement by 2010 of a significant reduction in the current rate of loss of biological diversity, which will require action at all levels, including the implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans and the provision of new and additional financial and technical resources to developing countries,

Deeply concerned by the continued loss of biological diversity and the associated decline in the ecosystem services of our planet and their far-reaching environmental, social, economic and cultural impacts, and acknowledging that an unprecedented effort is needed to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction in the rate of loss of biological diversity,

Noting the need for enhanced cooperation among the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (“the Rio Conventions”), while respecting their individual mandates, concerned by the negative impacts that loss of biodiversity, desertification, land degradation and climate change have on each other, and recognizing the potential benefits of complementarities in addressing these problems in a mutually supportive manner with a view to achieving the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity,

Acknowledging the contribution that the ongoing work of the Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore, of the World Intellectual Property Organization, can make in enhancing the effective implementation of the provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity,

Noting the contribution that South-South cooperation can make in the area of biological diversity,

Expressing deep appreciation to the Government of Germany for hosting the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and its fourth meeting serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, and welcoming the offer of the Government of Japan to hold the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties and its fifth meeting serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, in 2010,

Taking note of the reports of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment,

Noting the efforts of the Life Web initiative promoted by the Government of Germany and other countries,

Noting also the holding in Putrajaya, Malaysia, from 10 to 12 November 2008, of an ad hoc intergovernmental

tal and multi-stakeholder meeting on an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services, convened by the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme,

Noting further the initiative launched at the meeting of the environmental ministers of the Group of Eight in Potsdam, Germany, in March 2007, to develop a study on the economic cost of the global loss of biodiversity,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity on the work of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention;

2. *Encourages* developed countries parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to contribute to the relevant trust funds of the Convention, in particular so as to enhance the full participation of the developing countries parties in all of its activities;

3. *Urges* all Member States to fulfil their commitments to significantly reduce the rate of loss of biodiversity by 2010, and emphasizes that this will require an appropriate focus on the loss of biodiversity in their relevant policies and programmes and the continued provision of new and additional financial and technical resources to developing countries, including through the Global Environment Facility;

4. *Takes note* of the outcomes of the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and its fourth meeting serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety;

5. *Urges* the parties to the Convention to facilitate the transfer of technology for the effective implementation of the Convention in accordance with its provisions, and in this regard takes note of the strategy for the practical implementation of the programme of work on technology transfer and scientific and technological cooperation developed by the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Technology Transfer and Scientific and Technological Cooperation, as a preliminary basis for concrete activities by parties and international organizations;

6. *Notes* the ongoing work of the Heads of Agencies Task Force on the 2010 Biodiversity Target, of the chairpersons of the scientific advisory bodies of the biodiversity-related conventions and of the Joint Liaison Group of the secretariats and offices of the relevant subsidiary bodies of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, and the Convention on Biological Diversity, aimed at enhancing scientific and technical collaboration for achieving the 2010 biodiversity target;

7. *Notes also* the adoption by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity at its ninth meeting of a strategy for resource mobilization in support of the achievement of the three objectives of the Convention, and, in accordance with Conference of the Parties decision IX/11 and the annexes thereto, invites parties to submit, to the secretariat of the Convention, views on concrete activities and initiatives, including measurable targets and/or indicators to achieve the strategic goals contained in the strategy, and on indicators to monitor its implementation;

8. *Takes note* of decision IX/12 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, on access and benefit-sharing, and the annexes thereto, by which the Conference established a road map for the negotiations contained in that decision and, inter alia:

(a) Reiterated its instruction to the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing to complete the elaboration and negotiation of the international access and benefit-sharing regime at the earliest possible time before the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, in accordance with decisions VII/19 D and VIII/4 A; and

(b) Further instructed the Working Group to finalize the international regime and to submit for consideration and adoption by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention at its tenth meeting an instrument or instruments to effectively implement the provisions of articles 15 and 8 (j) of the Convention and its three objectives, without in any way prejudging or precluding any outcome regarding the nature of such instrument/instruments;

9. *Takes note also* of decision IX/20 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, on marine and coastal biodiversity, and the annexes thereto, by which the Conference, inter alia, adopted a set of scientific criteria for identifying ecologically or biologically significant marine areas in need of protection, contained in annex I to the decision, and scientific guidance for designing representative networks of marine protected areas, contained in annex II;

10. *Takes note further* of decision IX/5 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, on forest biodiversity;

11. *Encourages* the efforts being made to implement the seven thematic programmes of work, as established by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, as well as the ongoing work on cross-cutting issues;

12. *Reaffirms* the commitment, subject to national legislation, to respect, preserve and maintain the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, promote their wider application with the approval and involvement of the holders of such knowledge, innovations and practices and encourage the equitable sharing of the benefits arising from their utilization;

13. *Takes note* of decision IX/33 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, and the annex thereto, and invites parties to the Convention, other Member States, relevant international organizations and other relevant stakeholders to make preparations to celebrate in 2010 the International Year of Biodiversity, and in that regard:

(a) Invites all Member States to create national committees, with the participation of representatives of indigenous and local communities, to celebrate the International Year of Biodiversity, and invites all international organizations to mark the event;

(b) Invites the Secretary-General to consider appointing before 2010, within existing resources, an honorary ambassador for the International Year of Biodiversity, who would have a mandate to call for practical actions and solutions towards meeting the objectives of the Convention;

(c) Decides, as a contribution to the International Year of Biodiversity, to convene at its sixty-fifth session, in 2010, a one-day high-level meeting of the General Assembly, with participation of heads of State, Governments and delegations, taking into consideration the schedule of meetings of the Convention;

(d) Encourages United Nations departments, funds and programmes, the specialized agencies and regional commissions to fully support and participate, as appropriate, in the activities being envisaged for the observance of 2010 as the International Year of Biodiversity, under the auspices of the secretariat of the Convention;

14. *Stresses* the importance of private-sector engagement for the implementation of the objectives of the Convention and the achievement of the 2010 target, and invites businesses to align their policies and practices more explicitly with the objectives of the Convention, including, inter alia, through partnerships;

15. *Notes* the adoption by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention of decision IX/25, on South-South cooperation on biodiversity for development, and the ongoing efforts of the Executive Secretary in that regard;

16. *Notes also* the development of the gender plan of action under the Convention, and invites parties to support the implementation of the plan by the Convention secretariat;

17. *Takes note* of decision IX/16 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, on biodiversity and climate change, and the annexes thereto, by which the Conference, inter alia, established an Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Biodiversity and Climate Change with a mandate to develop scientific and technical advice on biodiversity in so far as it relates to climate change;

18. *Also takes note* of the ongoing work of the Joint Liaison Group of the secretariats and offices of the relevant subsidiary bodies of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, and the Convention on Biological Diversity, and further encourages continuing cooperation in order to promote complementarities among the secretariats, while respecting their independent legal status;

19. *Encourages* all parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to contribute to the discussions leading to an updated strategic plan for the Convention to be adopted at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, bearing in mind that this strategic plan should cover all three objectives of the Convention;

20. *Invites* the countries that have not yet done so to ratify or to accede to the Convention;

21. *Invites* countries to consider ratifying or acceding to the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture;

22. *Invites* the parties to the Convention that have not yet ratified or acceded to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to consider doing so, reiterates the commitment of States parties to the Protocol to support its implementation, and stresses that this will require the full support of parties and of relevant international organizations, in particular with regard to the provision of assistance to developing countries in capacity-building for biosafety;

23. *Invites* the secretariat of the Convention to report, through the Secretary-General, to the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session on the work of the Conference of the Parties and to include in the report information on the preparation of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly referred to above;

24. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-fourth session, under the item entitled “Sustainable development”, the sub-item entitled “Convention on Biological Diversity”.

Convention to Combat Desertification

As at 31 December, the total number of parties to the 1994 United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (UNCCD) [YUN 1994, p. 944], which entered into force in 1996 [YUN 1996, p. 958], stood at 193 States and the EU.

The seventh session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) (Istanbul, Turkey, 3–14 November) [ICCD/CRIC(7)/5], a subsidiary body of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, discussed, among other issues, the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention 2008–2018 (the Strategy). The report of the session contained conclusions and recommendations to further the implementation of the Strategy, which was adopted by the eighth (2007) session of the Conference of the Parties [YUN 2007, p. 1064]. The Committee on Science and Technology, another subsidiary body of the Conference, held its first special session in Istanbul concurrently with CRIC [ICCD/CST(S-1)/5].

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 19 December [meeting 72], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Second Committee [A/63/414/Add.5], adopted **resolution 63/218** without vote [agenda item 49 (e)].

Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 58/211 of 23 December 2003, 61/202 of 20 December 2006, 62/193 of 19 December 2007 and other resolutions relating to the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa,

Recalling also the 2005 World Summit Outcome,

Reasserting its commitment to combating and reversing desertification and land degradation in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas, consistent with articles 1, 2 and 3 of

the Convention, and to mitigating the effect of drought, eradicating extreme poverty, promoting sustainable development and improving the livelihoods of people affected by drought and/or desertification, taking into account the ten-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018),

Determined to build upon the momentum and to boost the spirit of international solidarity generated by the designation of 2006 as the International Year of Deserts and Desertification, and welcoming the adoption of the ten-year strategic plan and framework,

Reaffirming the universal membership of the Convention, and acknowledging that desertification, land degradation and drought are problems of a global dimension in that they affect all regions of the world,

Emphasizing that desertification, land degradation and drought seriously threaten the ability of developing countries to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and recognizing that the timely and effective implementation of the Convention would help to achieve these goals,

Noting the need for enhanced cooperation among the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity (the “Rio Conventions”), while respecting their individual mandates, concerned by the negative impacts that desertification, land degradation, loss of biodiversity and climate change have on each other, and recognizing the potential benefits of complementarities in addressing these problems in a mutually supportive manner,

Reaffirming the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (“Johannesburg Plan of Implementation”), which recognizes the Convention to Combat Desertification as one of the tools for poverty eradication,

Recognizing the need to provide the secretariat of the Convention with stable, adequate and predictable resources in order to enable it to continue to discharge its responsibilities in an efficient and timely manner,

Welcoming the decision of the Commission on Sustainable Development at its eleventh session to consider, inter alia, the issue of desertification and drought during its sixteenth and seventeenth sessions,

Welcoming also the fact that the Commission on Sustainable Development at its sixteenth session convened an inter-governmental forum to review some topics that are relevant to the Convention in preparation for policy decisions on those topics by the Commission at its seventeenth session,

Expressing its deep appreciation to the Government of Germany for hosting the High-level Policy Dialogue in Bonn on 27 May 2008,

Expressing its deep appreciation also to the Government of Turkey for hosting the seventh session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention and the first special session of the Committee on Science and Technology in Istanbul from 3 to 14 November 2008,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing

Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa;

2. *Reaffirms its resolve* to support and strengthen the implementation of the Convention with a view to addressing causes of desertification and land degradation, as well as poverty resulting from land degradation, through, inter alia, the mobilization of adequate and predictable financial resources, the transfer of technology and capacity-building at all levels;

3. *Reaffirms its decision* to declare the decade 2010–2020 as the United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification;

4. *Continues to support* the efforts of the Executive Secretary of the Convention to continue the administrative renewal and reform of the secretariat and to realign its functions in order to fully implement the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit and bring them into line with the ten-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018);

5. *Notes* the request made for an assessment of the Global Mechanism by the Joint Inspection Unit, and looks forward to its findings, which are to be submitted to the Conference of the Parties at its ninth session;

6. *Reiterates its call upon* Governments, where appropriate, in collaboration with relevant multilateral organizations, including the Global Environment Facility implementation agencies, to integrate desertification and land degradation into their plans and strategies for sustainable development;

7. *Invites* the affected countries to prepare national strategies for the effective implementation of sustainable land management, and invites donors to support such efforts, on request, and in accordance with all agreed commitments on aid effectiveness;

8. *Notes* the ongoing work of the Joint Liaison Group of the secretariats and offices of the relevant subsidiary bodies of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, and encourages continuing cooperation in order to promote complementarities in the work of the secretariats, while respecting their independent legal status;

9. *Recognizes* the potential of the Convention to Combat Desertification to contribute to addressing global food security, including by protecting land from becoming degraded and mitigating the effects of drought in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas, in order to offer new economic opportunities for enhancing rural development, agricultural productivity and food security for impoverished populations living in those areas;

10. *Invites* developed countries that are parties to the Convention and other Governments, multilateral organizations, the private sector and other relevant organizations to make resources available to affected developing countries for the implementation of the ten-year strategic plan and framework;

11. *Invites* the Executive Secretary of the Convention, in coordination with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, to actively prepare for and participate in the seventeenth session of the Commission

on Sustainable Development with a view to ensuring that the core issues of the Convention, in particular those relating to land degradation, drought and desertification, are duly considered in the context of sustainable development during the deliberations of the policy session, with a view to ensuring a successful outcome from the entire cycle of the Commission;

12. *Encourages* developed countries that are parties to the Convention to consider, in accordance with their different obligations under the Convention, prioritizing the need for supporting the implementation of the ten-year strategic plan and framework in their respective policies and programmes for cooperation, and further encourages affected developing countries to consider making this a priority in their cooperation assistance arrangements;

13. *Invites* donors to the Global Environment Facility to ensure that the Facility is adequately resourced during the next replenishment period in order to allow it to allocate sufficient and adequate resources to its six focal areas, in particular its land degradation focal area;

14. *Recognizes* the cross-sectoral nature of desertification, land degradation and drought mitigation, and in this regard invites all relevant United Nations organizations to cooperate with the Convention secretariat in supporting an effective response to desertification and drought;

15. *Urges* the Committee on Science and Technology to accelerate its efforts to establish links with scientific communities in order to make full use of relevant initiatives in areas relating to sustainable land and water management;

16. *Requests* all States parties to the Convention to promote awareness among local populations, particularly women, youth and civil society organizations, of, and to include them in, the implementation of the ten-year strategic plan and framework, and encourages affected States parties and donors to take into account the issue of participation of civil society in Convention processes when setting priorities in national development strategies;

17. *Stresses* the need to accelerate the ongoing process of adopting the euro as the budgetary and accounting currency of the Convention secretariat, and in this regard requests the Secretary-General, taking into account the institutional linkage and related administrative arrangements between the Convention secretariat and the United Nations Secretariat, to facilitate the implementation of decisions of the Conference of the Parties related to the protection of the Convention budget against the negative effects of currency fluctuations;

18. *Invites* the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, when setting the dates of its meetings, to take into consideration the schedule of meetings of the General Assembly and the Commission on Sustainable Development so as to help to ensure the adequate representation of developing countries at those meetings;

19. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-fourth session the sub-item entitled "Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa";

20. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution, including a report on the implementation of the Convention.

International Conference on Combating Desertification

In a letter of 14 March [E/CN.17/2008/15], China transmitted to the Secretary-General the report of the International Conference on Combating Desertification (Beijing, China, 22–24 January). The Conference was jointly organized by the State Forestry Administration of China and the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), with support from the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Parks and Forestry and the UNCCD secretariat. It brought together some 240 participants from 55 countries and 40 UN organizations and international and regional institutions. Thematic discussions were held on the barriers and constraints faced by countries in combating desertification and land degradation, and on lessons learned and best practices in addressing those challenges. The Conference adopted the Beijing Statement on Combating Desertification and Promoting Sustainable Development, which set out the key points highlighted during the Conference.

Environmental activities

The atmosphere

Report of Secretary-General. In response to General Assembly resolution 62/8 [YUN 2007, p. 1067], the Secretary-General in January submitted a report [A/62/644] which reviewed UN system activities related to climate change. The report was based on written submissions from members of the United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) and consultations in the framework of the CEB High-level Committee on Programmes. It described activities related to science, assessment, monitoring and early warning, and support of global, regional and national action on climate change. It outlined UN activities in the sectors of adaptation to, and mitigation of climate change, as well as technology and financing for climate change responses. Cross-cutting sectors included education, advocacy and awareness-raising.

The report contained a paper prepared by CEB on coordinated UN system action on climate change. Under the Secretary-General's leadership, CEB was aligning its strengths to achieve a coordinated approach to climate change. The objective was to support the process for an international agreement within the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) [YUN 1992, p. 681] (see p. 1155), as well as the efforts of Member States to tackle the challenges presented by climate change. The paper defined key areas of action and an effective coordination structure for the UN system. It highlighted the critical role of the UN system in the areas of science, assessment, monitoring and early warning as a basis

for informed action, and articulated its contribution in supporting global, regional and national action on climate change. The paper also outlined the means by which the UN system could coordinate its substantive work in the key sectors of energy, agriculture and fisheries, water, oceans, forestry, health, transport, disaster risk reduction, population and human settlements, education, and raising public awareness.

It also discussed the UN system's efforts for establishing climate-neutrality in its own work. The Secretary-General tasked the Environment Management Group, under the leadership of the UNEP Executive Director, to develop approaches on how to best make the United Nations climate-neutral. The Group proposed to CEB a framework for guiding efforts on climate-neutrality, a strategic approach on achieving a climate-neutral United Nations and a commitment from all agencies to implement the initiative. The UN system would seek to reduce energy consumption at UN Headquarters, conduct an environmental audit of procurement and renovations at Headquarters, calculate emissions from air travel, and lead by example in individual institutions. The report also listed areas of potential UN system support to the implementation of climate change negotiation results.

General Assembly thematic debate. The resumed sixty-second (2008) session of the General Assembly held a thematic debate entitled "Addressing Climate Change: The United Nations and the World at Work" from 11 to 13 February, with plenary meetings on 12 and 13 February [A/62/PV.80–84]. The Assembly President, in his opening statement, said that the Assembly had a unique role to play on climate change, but in order to contribute most effectively, it needed to create more effective partnerships with a common vision and a global alliance for action. It also needed to help define a global strategy for the UN system to respond to climate change. The President emphasized that climate change was a sustainable development issue as well as an environmental one.

The Secretary-General, in a statement made at the opening session, said that the international community was armed with a combination of authoritative and compelling science on climate change, a rising tide of public concern and declarations of political will voiced at the 2007 Bali Climate Change Conference [YUN 2007, p. 1060]. The UN system was committed to supporting Member States as an effective, inclusive and credible partner in mitigating and adapting to climate change. Success was only possible if all countries acted, but developed countries needed to take the lead. Representatives of 101 countries and seven international organizations spoke in the ensuing debate.

Governing Council action. On 22 February [dec. SS.X/4], the UNEP Governing Council reaffirmed its commitment to support efforts to mitigate and adapt

to climate change, which were interlinked with efforts to reduce the loss of biodiversity, control desertification, eradicate extreme poverty and famine, promote sustainable development and improve the lives of affected or vulnerable populations. It invited the Economic and Social Council to consider a proposal for the proclamation of an International Decade for addressing Climate Change for the period 2010–2020 and inform the General Assembly prior to its sixty-third (2008) session.

Communication. A letter of 14 March [A/63/66] from the Sudan to the Assembly President contained the Arab Ministerial Declaration on Climate Change, adopted by the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment at its nineteenth session (Cairo, Egypt, 5–6 December 2007). The Declaration reflected the Arab position on addressing climate change and constituted a basis for future action.

High-Level Conference. The Beijing High-Level Conference on Climate Change: Technology Development and Technology Transfer (Beijing, 7–8 November) issued a statement in which the ministers and Government representatives participating in the Conference reaffirmed their commitment to UNFCCC and the 2007 Bali Action Plan for implementing the Convention [YUN 2007, p. 1060].

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

The twenty-eighth session of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (Budapest, Hungary, 9–10 April) decided to produce a fifth assessment report, to be finalized in 2014, with a target date of early 2013 for the release of the Working Group I report. The current structure of IPCC Working Groups would be retained, with Groups dealing with the physical science basis; impacts, adaptation and vulnerability; and climate change mitigation. The Panel agreed to organize the new assessment work around a revised set of scenarios of socio-economic, climate and environmental conditions. It decided to prepare a special report on renewable energy sources and climate change mitigation, to be delivered in 2010.

IPCC also discussed the review of the principles governing its work; the use of funds from the Nobel Peace Prize 2007, won jointly with former United States Vice President Albert Arnold Gore, Jr. [YUN 2007, p. 1067]; admission of observer organizations; outreach activities; and progress reports of IPCC Working Groups and Task Forces.

The twenty-ninth IPCC session (Geneva, 31 August–4 September) commemorated the Panel's twentieth anniversary. It adopted its 2009 budget and took note of the indicative budgets for 2010 and 2011, and for the three following years up to the end of the Fifth Assessment cycle. The Panel, having considered

proposals for the use of the funds from the Nobel Peace Prize 2007, decided to set up a scholarship fund for young post-graduate or post-doctoral students in climate change sciences from developing countries, especially least developed countries, as described in a report to the session [IPCC-XXIX/Doc.8, Rev.1]. IPCC elected its Bureau and the Task Force Bureau, and discussed procedural matters, future activities and other issues.

Terrestrial ecosystems

Deforestation and forest degradation

The United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) did not meet in 2008. In accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 2007/274 [YUN 2007, p. 1068], the eighth session of UNFF would be held in 2009.

In September [E/CN.18/2008/2], the Secretariat issued a note on financing for sustainable forest management: mobilizing financial resources to support the implementation of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests [YUN 2007, p. 1069], adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 62/98 [ibid., p. 1072], and to promote sustainable forest management. The note was prepared to facilitate discussions at the meeting of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Expert Group to Develop Proposals for the Development of a Voluntary Global Financial Mechanism/Portfolio Approach/Forest Financing Framework (Vienna, 10–14 November) [E/CN.18/2009/11]. The meeting reviewed the instrument and major forest and finance issues; discussed the role of the private sector; reviewed recent international financial cooperation; described emerging issues; and presented conclusions for consideration by the Ad Hoc Expert Group.

Illicit trafficking in forest products

The seventeenth session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (Vienna, 14–18 April) [E/2008/30] (see p. 1222) considered the report of the meeting of the Open-ended Expert Group on International Cooperation in Preventing and Combating Illicit International Trafficking in Forest Products, including Timber, Wildlife and Other Forest Biological Resources (Jakarta, Indonesia, 26–28 March) [E/CN.15/2008/20]. The report, prepared pursuant to Commission resolution 16/1 [YUN 2007, p. 1148], reflected the views of the experts on ways and means of fostering international cooperation to combat illicit international trafficking in forest products through the use of the 2000 United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime [YUN 2000, p. 1048] and the 2003 United Nations Convention against Corruption [YUN 2003, p. 1127], and of enhancing the capacity of law enforcement

and forestry authorities to enforce the rule of law in the forest sector. The Expert Group noted the serious economic, social and environmental consequences of illicit international trafficking in forest products. Such trafficking exacerbated unsustainable forest practices; increased the cost of forest management and distorted the marketplace; and had an adverse environmental impact on forest ecosystems and on the conservation of forest resources and biodiversity. The Group emphasized the social consequences of forest crime for local communities and vulnerable groups that were heavily dependent upon forests for their livelihoods and security.

The Expert Group stressed the need to expand knowledge of the scope and scale of the problems created by illicit international trafficking in forest products, including the severe economic, environmental and social impact of such crime. Gaining a common understanding of such problems was a prerequisite for more coherent and consistent action at the national level and to enhancing bilateral, regional and interregional cooperation. It was also important to ensure that countries had common perceptions of the definition of legality and the conceptualization of legal and illegal acts in the forest sector. Rationalizing and streamlining national laws and regulations was essential for effective forest law enforcement and governance. Forest law enforcement responses could best be enhanced by improving detection methods, establishing specialized enforcement units, allowing direct channels of communication and creating networks for information-sharing. Preventive policies in the field of forest crime should include educational campaigns and the development of public information material to raise awareness among the public and ensure their support for forest law enforcement action. Implementation of national strategies and policies should foster inter-agency coordination and promote synergies and partnerships with NGOs and the private sector.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ACTION

On 24 July [meeting 42], the Economic and Social Council, on the recommendation of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice [E/2008/30], adopted **resolution 2008/25** without vote [agenda item 14 (c)].

International cooperation in preventing and combating illicit international trafficking in forest products, including timber, wildlife and other forest biological resources

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling its resolutions 2001/12 of 24 July 2001 and 2003/27 of 22 July 2003 on illicit trafficking in protected species of wild flora and fauna, and its resolutions 2000/35

of 18 October 2000 and 2006/49 of 28 July 2006 concerning the international arrangements on forests,

Bearing in mind the relevance of international instruments such as the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 62/98 of 17 December 2007, by which the Assembly adopted the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests, contained in the annex to that resolution,

Recalling also resolution 16/1 adopted by the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice at its sixteenth session,

Noting with concern that illicit international trafficking in forest products, including timber, wildlife and other forest biological resources, constitutes a major source of concern because such activities have an adverse environmental, social and economic impact on many countries,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the report of the meeting of the Open-ended Expert Group on International Cooperation in Preventing and Combating Illicit International Trafficking in Forest Products, including Timber, Wildlife and Other Forest Biological Resources, held in Jakarta from 26 to 28 March 2008;

2. *Encourages* Member States to continue to provide the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime with information on measures taken pursuant to Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice resolution 16/1, taking into consideration the emphasis that the Open-ended Expert Group, in its report, placed on, inter alia, the need for holistic and comprehensive national multisectoral approaches to preventing and combating illicit international trafficking in forest products, including timber, wildlife and other forest biological resources, as well as for international coordination and cooperation in support of such approaches, including through technical assistance activities to build the capacity of relevant national officials and institutions;

3. *Requests* the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to make the text of the present resolution and the report of the Open-ended Expert Group available to the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime at its fourth session;

4. *Also requests* the Executive Director to report on the implementation of the present resolution and to provide a brief summary of the mandates and the work of other relevant organizations in this area to the Commission at its eighteenth session.

Drought and desertification

The Commission on Sustainable Development, at its sixteenth session (New York, 5–16 May) [E/2008/29] (see p. 915), considered a February report of the Secretary-General [E/CN.17/2008/6] reviewing the implementation of the goals related to the thematic area of drought, as contained in Agenda 21 [YUN 1992, p. 672]; the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, adopted by the nine-

teenth special session of the General Assembly in resolution S/19-2 [YUN 1997, p. 792]; and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation [YUN 2002, p. 822]. The report discussed facts and figures on drought, issues related to drought management and early warning and climate and weather information. It stated that projected climatic changes were likely to further exacerbate the frequency and severity of droughts, with adverse impacts on food production and food security, in particular in Africa. The challenge was to reduce the vulnerability of the agricultural sector to climate variability and the projected changes in extreme weather events. Improved access to appropriate and affordable technologies and related field training and capacity-building to grow resilient crops proved to be important in maintaining soil productivity and increasing food production in drought-affected drylands. The projected persistence and severity of droughts underscored the urgency of gradually shifting priority in drought management of affected countries and regions from essentially sector-specific strategies and policies to those that integrated management of natural resources and ecosystems with social and economic development strategies and action plans. A proactive, risk-based approach to drought management proved to be effective in preventing or reducing the physical and economic losses associated with drought. Inadequate financial resources and technical capacities often hampered the implementation of programmes and projects on drought risk management. The lack of systematic collection and analysis of drought-relevant data in many affected countries also hampered effective drought impact assessment.

The Commission also had before it the February report of the Secretary-General [E/CN.17/2008/7] reviewing the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation with regard to desertification. The report discussed facts and figures on desertification and the correlation between land use, land productivity and livelihoods in drylands. It addressed issues related to the conservation of dryland vegetation; maintaining freshwater bodies and groundwater resources; and various means of combating desertification. The level of rural poverty in many developing countries affected by desertification and drought, which was particularly high in Africa, continued to be the overarching challenge in the fight against desertification. The projected intensification of freshwater scarcity would cause greater stresses in drylands and, if left unmitigated, would further exacerbate desertification. Weak institutional and legal structures and capacities, poor coordination and collaboration among stakeholders involved in combating desertification and poor enforcement of legislation to guarantee clear legal ownership

and access rights to land, water and other natural resources hampered the implementation of effective interventions. Providing economic and non-economic incentives to national stakeholders to encourage investments in the sustainable management of land, forests and other ecosystems could play a critical role in mobilizing financial resources. Dissemination of new and emerging technologies to field application in affected developing countries also remained a challenge. The 10-year strategic plan and framework adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification at its eighth (2007) session [YUN 2007, p. 1064] had strengthened the international commitment to combat desertification, mitigate the effects of drought and combat climate change. The Convention offered a platform for adaptation, mitigation and resilience.

Marine ecosystems

Oceans and seas

In response to General Assembly resolutions 61/222 [YUN 2006, p. 1557] and 62/215 [YUN 2007, p. 1402], the ninth meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and Law of the Sea (New York, 23–27 June) [A/63/174 & Corr.1] focused on maritime security and safety. The meeting reached agreement on elements relating to that issue, which were proposed by the Co-Chairpersons of the Consultative Process for consideration by the Assembly. The Assembly took action with regard to maritime safety and security and the Consultative Process in sections VIII and XIV of **resolution 63/111** of 5 December (see pp. 1503 & 1510).

Assessment of assessments

The Group of Experts for the start-up phase of the “assessment of assessments” [YUN 2004, p. 1332] of the regular process for the global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic aspects, held its third meeting (Copenhagen, Denmark, 15–17 April) [GRAME/GOE/3/2]. The meeting agreed on the outlines for the “assessment of assessments” report, and agreed that the first draft of the Introduction and Part II, along with the outlines for Parts I and III, would be submitted for peer review by the end of May.

UNEP and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the lead agencies for the “assessment of assessments”, prepared a progress report on the “assessment of assessments” that was issued in June.

The third meeting of the Ad Hoc Steering Group for the “assessment of assessments” (New York, 19–20 June) [GRAME/AHSG/3/2] discussed the approach for presenting the final “assessment of assessments” report to the General Assembly’s sixty-fourth (2009) session, as well as a new resource mobilization strategy to ensure adequate financial resources for completing scheduled activities.

The fourth meeting of the Group of Experts (London, 4–6 November) focused on finalizing the chapters of the “assessment of assessments” report so that they could be submitted for Government and expert peer review, which was scheduled to take place from 1 December 2008 to 31 January 2009. The Group of experts also discussed the procedures of the peer review process and proposed a list of reviewers to be invited to participate in that process. The Group agreed on the production schedule of the report and the summary for decision makers.

The General Assembly, in section XII of **resolution 63/111** of 5 December (see p. 1509) took note of the report of the third meeting of the Ad Hoc Steering Group and the “assessment of assessments” progress report, endorsed by the Steering Group. It urged all members of the Steering Group to participate in the review of the completed “assessment of assessments” report and the summary for decision makers at the Group’s meeting in 2009.

Regional Seas Programme

The tenth Global Meeting of the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans (Guayaquil, Ecuador, 25–27 November) discussed climate change and the regional seas programme; ecosystem management and the regional seas programmes; cooperation with multilateral environmental agreements; sustainable financing and legal instruments to further the implementation of the Regional Seas Work Programme; and enhancing communication.

Caribbean Sea management

In response to General Assembly resolution 61/197 [YUN 2006, p. 1243], the Secretary-General submitted an August report [A/63/297] that described regional and national activities undertaken in the Caribbean region to ensure the protection of the Caribbean Sea from degradation, pollution and loss of marine biodiversity. It also provided an update on regional and international support extended to the promotion of the sustainable development of the resources of the Caribbean Sea for present and future generations. The Association of Caribbean States (ACS) remained engaged in supporting the ongoing initiative of the region to have the Caribbean Sea declared a special area in the context of sustainable development.

To that end, the Caribbean Sea Commission was established in September 2006 to provide a structure for political oversight, technical resources and research support for the Caribbean Sea initiative, and promote regional efforts for achieving the preservation and sustainable use of the Caribbean Sea. Regional experts working through a technical advisory group created by ACS provided technical support for the Commission's work.

Annexed to the Secretary-General's report was the report on the work of ACS, submitted in response to resolution 61/197. ACS provided details on its activities related to sustainable tourism and disaster reduction. The outcome of the High-level Conference on Disaster Reduction of the Association of Caribbean States (Saint-Marc, Haiti, 14–16 November 2007), known as the Saint-Marc Plan of Action, was endorsed by the ACS Ministerial Council as a 27-point document that would inform the ACS work programme in the area of disaster risk reduction. The report also outlined the Commission's Plan of Action, which, along with its programme of activities, was finalized at the Commission's July 2008 meeting.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 19 December [meeting 72], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Second Committee [A/63/414/Add.2], adopted **resolution 63/214** without vote [agenda item 49 (b)].

Towards the sustainable development of the Caribbean Sea for present and future generations

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming the principles and commitments enshrined in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the principles embodied in the Declaration of Barbados, the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development ("Johannesburg Plan of Implementation"), as well as other relevant declarations and international instruments,

Recalling the Declaration and review document adopted by the General Assembly at its twenty-second special session,

Taking into account all other relevant General Assembly resolutions, including resolutions 54/225 of 22 December 1999, 55/203 of 20 December 2000, 57/261 of 20 December 2002, 59/230 of 22 December 2004 and 61/197 of 20 December 2006,

Taking into account also the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,

Recalling the 2005 World Summit Outcome,

Recalling also the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Carib-

bean Region, signed at Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, on 24 March 1983, and the protocols thereto, which contain the definition of the wider Caribbean region of which the Caribbean Sea is part,

Reaffirming the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which provides the overall legal framework for ocean activities, and emphasizing its fundamental character, conscious that the problems of ocean space are closely interrelated and need to be considered as a whole through an integrated, interdisciplinary and intersectoral approach,

Emphasizing the importance of national, regional and global action and cooperation in the marine sector as recognized by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in chapter 17 of Agenda 21,

Recalling the relevant work done by the International Maritime Organization,

Considering that the Caribbean Sea area includes a large number of States, countries and territories, most of which are developing countries and small island developing States that are ecologically fragile and socially and economically vulnerable and are also affected, inter alia, by their limited capacity, narrow resource base, need for financial resources, high levels of poverty and the resulting social problems and the challenges and opportunities of globalization and trade liberalization,

Recognizing that the Caribbean Sea has unique biodiversity and highly fragile ecosystems,

Recognizing also that the Caribbean has been shown to be the most tourism-dependent region in the world relative to its size,

Noting that the Caribbean Sea, when compared to all other large marine ecosystems, is surrounded by the largest number of countries in the world,

Emphasizing that the Caribbean countries have a high degree of vulnerability occasioned by climate change, climate variability and associated phenomena, such as the rise in sea level, the El Niño phenomenon and the increase in the frequency and intensity of natural disasters caused by hurricanes, floods and droughts, and that they are also subject to natural disasters, such as those caused by volcanoes, tsunamis and earthquakes,

Bearing in mind the heavy reliance of most of the Caribbean economies on their coastal areas, as well as on the marine environment in general, to achieve their sustainable development needs and goals,

Acknowledging that the intensive use of the Caribbean Sea for maritime transport, as well as the considerable number and interlocking character of the maritime areas under national jurisdiction where Caribbean countries exercise their rights and duties under international law, present a challenge for the effective management of the resources,

Noting the problem of marine pollution caused, inter alia, by land-based sources and the continuing threat of pollution from ship-generated waste and sewage, as well as from the accidental release of hazardous and noxious substances in the Caribbean Sea area,

Taking note of the relevant resolutions of the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency on safety of transport of radioactive materials,

Mindful of the diversity and dynamic interaction and competition among socio-economic activities for the use

of the coastal areas and the marine environment and their resources,

Mindful also of the efforts of the Caribbean countries to address in a more holistic manner the sectoral issues relating to the management of the wider Caribbean Sea region and, in so doing, to promote integrated management of the wider Caribbean Sea region in the context of sustainable development, through a regional cooperative effort among Caribbean countries,

Welcoming the continued efforts of the States members of the Association of Caribbean States to develop and implement regional initiatives to promote the sustainable conservation and management of coastal and marine resources, and recognizing in this regard the firm commitment by Heads of State and Government of the Association to take the steps necessary to ensure the recognition of the Caribbean Sea as a special area within the context of sustainable development, without prejudice to relevant international law,

Taking note of the creation by the Association of Caribbean States of the Caribbean Sea Commission, and welcoming its ongoing work,

Cognizant of the importance of the Caribbean Sea to present and future generations and to the heritage and the continuing economic well-being and sustenance of people living in the area, and the urgent need for the countries of the region to take appropriate steps for its preservation and protection, with the support of the international community,

1. *Recognizes* that the Caribbean Sea is an area of unique biodiversity and a highly fragile ecosystem that requires relevant regional and international development partners to work together to develop and implement regional initiatives to promote the sustainable conservation and management of coastal and marine resources, including, inter alia, the consideration of the concept of the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of sustainable development, including its designation as such without prejudice to relevant international law;

2. *Takes note* of the efforts of the Caribbean States and the work undertaken by the Caribbean Sea Commission of the Association of Caribbean States, including, inter alia, the development of their concept of the designation of the Caribbean Sea as a special area within the context of sustainable development, and invites the international community to support such efforts;

3. *Welcomes* the plan of action adopted by the Caribbean Sea Commission, including its scientific and technical components and governance and outreach components, and invites the international community and the United Nations system to support, as appropriate, Caribbean countries and their regional organizations in their efforts to implement the plan of action;

4. *Recognizes* the efforts of Caribbean countries to create conditions leading to sustainable development aimed at combating poverty and inequality, and in this regard notes with interest the initiatives of the Association of Caribbean States in the focal areas of sustainable tourism, trade, transport and natural disasters;

5. *Calls upon* the United Nations system and the international community to assist, as appropriate, Caribbean countries and their regional organizations in their efforts to ensure the protection of the Caribbean Sea from degradation as a result of pollution from ships, in particular

through the illegal release of oil and other harmful substances, and from illegal dumping or accidental release of hazardous waste, including radioactive materials, nuclear waste and dangerous chemicals, in violation of relevant international rules and standards, as well as pollution from land-based activities;

6. *Invites* the Association of Caribbean States to submit a report to the Secretary-General on the progress made in the implementation of the present resolution, for consideration during the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly;

7. *Calls upon* all States to become contracting parties to relevant international agreements to enhance maritime safety and promote the protection of the marine environment of the Caribbean Sea from pollution, damage and degradation from ships and ship-generated waste;

8. *Supports* the efforts of Caribbean countries to implement sustainable fisheries management programmes and to meet the principles of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations;

9. *Calls upon* States, taking into consideration the Convention on Biological Diversity, to develop national, regional and international programmes to halt the loss of marine biodiversity in the Caribbean Sea, in particular fragile ecosystems such as coral reefs and mangroves;

10. *Invites* Member States and intergovernmental organizations within the United Nations system to continue their efforts to assist Caribbean countries in becoming parties to the relevant conventions and protocols concerning the management, protection and sustainable utilization of Caribbean Sea resources and in implementing them effectively;

11. *Calls upon* the international community, the United Nations system and the multilateral financial institutions, and invites the Global Environment Facility, within its mandate, to support actively the national and regional activities of the Caribbean States towards the promotion of the sustainable management of coastal and marine resources;

12. *Expresses deep concern* about the severe destruction and devastation caused to several countries by heightened hurricane activity in the wider Caribbean region in recent years;

13. *Urges* the United Nations system and the international community to continue to provide aid and assistance to the countries of the Caribbean region in the implementation of their long-term programmes of disaster prevention, preparedness, mitigation, management, relief and recovery, based on their development priorities, through the integration of relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction into a comprehensive approach to sustainable development;

14. *Acknowledges* the pivotal role of the Association of Caribbean States in regional dialogue and in the consolidation of a wider Caribbean cooperation zone in the field of disaster risk reduction, as well as the importance of the international community in deepening existing cooperation and consolidating new initiatives with that regional mechanism within the context of the outcomes of the High-level Conference on Disaster Reduction of the Association of Caribbean States, held in Saint-Marc, Haiti, from 14 to 16 November 2007, and the plan of action approved by the

Ministerial Council of the Association upon the recommendation of the Conference;

15. *Invites* Member States, international and regional organizations and other relevant stakeholders to consider training programmes for the development of a human resource capacity at different levels and to developing research aimed at enhancing the food security of Caribbean countries, as well as the sustainable management of renewable marine and coastal resources;

16. *Calls upon* Member States to improve as a matter of priority their emergency response capabilities and the containment of environmental damage, particularly in the Caribbean Sea, in the event of natural disasters or of an accident or incident relating to maritime navigation;

17. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to it at its sixty-fifth session, under the sub-item entitled "Follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States" of the item entitled "Sustainable development", on the implementation of the present resolution, including a section on the possible legal and financial implications of the concept of the Caribbean Sea as a special area within the context of sustainable development, including its designation as such without prejudice to relevant international law, taking into account the views expressed by Member States and relevant regional organizations.

Protection against harmful products and waste

Chemical safety

As at 31 December, 126 States and the EU were parties to the 1998 Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade [YUN 1998, p. 997], which entered into force in 2004 [YUN 2004, p. 1063].

The Chemical Review Committee, a subsidiary body of the Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention, at its fourth meeting (Geneva, 10–13 March) [UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.4/11], agreed to consider the notifications of final regulatory action scheduled for review by the Committee in line with the priorities suggested in a secretariat note [UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.4/3]; and reviewed notifications of final regulatory action to ban or severely restrict six chemicals. The Committee also discussed its role and mandate, which were described in a secretariat note [UNEP/FAO/RC/CRC.4/4], as well as its intersessional work, working papers and policy guidance.

The fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention (Rome, 27–31 October) [UNEP/FAO/RC/COP.4/24] adopted a decision on enhancing cooperation and coordination among the Rotterdam Convention, the 1989 Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements

of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal [YUN 1989, p. 420] and the 2001 Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants [YUN 2001, p. 971]. In accordance with that decision, the Conference of the Parties adopted—as an extraordinary, one-time measure—a three-year budget cycle for the 2009–2011 period to facilitate synchronization with the budget cycles of the Basel and Stockholm Conventions, UNEP and FAO; and approved the programme activities and operational programme budget for the triennium. The Conference of the Parties amended annex III of the Convention to list all tributyltin compounds and decided that the amendment would enter into force on 1 February 2009. Other decisions dealt with the inclusion of chrysotile asbestos and endosulfan in annex III; progress in implementing the Convention; confirmation of the appointments of Government-designated experts as members of the Chemical Review Committee; nomination of Governments to designate experts for the Committee; compliance procedures and mechanisms; options for lasting and sustainable financial mechanisms; national and regional delivery of technical assistance; and cooperation with the World Trade Organization.

IFCS session. The sixth session of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS) (Dakar, Senegal, 15–19 September) [IFCS/FORUM-VI/07w] focused on the role of partnerships for chemical safety in achieving the goal of the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development [YUN 2002, p. 821] that, by 2020, chemicals had to be used and produced in ways that minimized significant adverse effects on human health and the environment [ibid., p. 822]. IFCS adopted the Dakar Resolution on the future of the Forum, in which it invited the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM) to integrate IFCS into the Conference by establishing the Forum as an ICCM advisory body. IFCS also adopted a resolution for eliminating lead in paints; a statement on manufactured nanomaterials; and recommendations on the substitution and alternatives to hazardous substances in products and processes, and on key elements of pesticide risk reduction strategies.

International chemicals management

On 22 February [dec. SS.X/1], the UNEP Governing Council decided to consider at its twenty-fifth (2009) session the programme-related matters raised in the reports of the Executive Director on waste management (see p. 1174); progress of the ad hoc open-ended working group on mercury (see p. 1171); and efforts of the secretariat of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) [YUN 2006, p. 1247] to explore more effective use of funding provisions of the Approach and the implementation

of SAICM by the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC) [YUN 2007, p. 1077]. It requested the Executive Director to continue to implement its 2007 multi-part decision on chemicals management [YUN 2007, p. 1077] and its 2007 decision on waste management [ibid., p. 1080].

In response to the Council's decision, the Executive Director in November submitted a report [UNEP/GC.25/5], which described UNEP activities to support SAICM implementation; IOMC efforts to implement SAICM; the second (2009) session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management; and UNEP activities related to lead, cadmium and mercury (see below). UNEP activities on chemicals contributed to the SAICM policy framework for efforts to attain the 2020 goal of the Plan of Implementation of the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development [YUN 2002, p. 821] related to chemicals [ibid., p. 822]. UNDP and UNEP developed a partnership to facilitate the integration of the sound management of chemicals into development planning to support sustainable development in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. With funding support secured through the Quick Start Programme Trust Fund under SAICM, the partnership initiative was launched in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Uganda; activities in Belarus, Belize, Ecuador, Honduras, Liberia and Mauritania would begin in 2009.

Lead and cadmium

In response to a 2007 Governing Council decision [YUN 2007, p. 1078], the Executive Director, in his November report on chemicals management [UNEP/GC.25/5], provided information on UNEP activities related to lead and cadmium. The Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles continued to support countries in eliminating the use of leaded gasoline and reducing sulphur levels in fuels. At the beginning of 2008, 19 countries were still using leaded gasoline. During the year, three countries—Jordan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Mongolia—and the Occupied Palestinian Territory ceased using leaded gasoline. Afghanistan and Morocco were expected to phase out its use at the end of 2008. Tunisia committed itself to phasing out leaded gasoline in the near future. Leaded gasoline phase-out was a major component of three subregional events coordinated by the Partnership in the Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia region in January; the Gulf region in March; and North Africa in August. Through the events, countries were assisted in setting timelines and strategies to end the use of such gasoline. Sweden contributed approximately \$180,000 to support the development of a study on the effects of trade in products contain-

ing lead, cadmium and mercury in Africa. The study [UNEP/GC.25/INF/23/Add.1] was presented at an inter-governmental workshop in December.

Notes by the Executive Director [UNEP/GC.25/INF/23 & UNEP/GC.25/INF/24] contained reviews of scientific information on lead and cadmium, an overview of legislation and an inventory of risk management measures.

Mercury

The ad hoc open-ended working group on mercury held its second meeting (Nairobi, Kenya, 6–10 October) [UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/OEWG.2/13] to finalize the report on how to respond to the challenges presented by mercury. In response to the Governing Council's 2007 decision on mercury [YUN 2007, p. 1078], the report was to be submitted to the Council in 2009. In reviewing and assessing options for enhanced voluntary measures and new or existing international legal instruments dealing with mercury, the meeting considered possible elements of a mercury framework [UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/OEWG.2/8] and discussed capacity-building and financial mechanisms for the framework and modalities for the Working Group's report to the Governing Council. It also discussed progress in developing a study on atmospheric emissions of mercury and strengthening the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership (see below).

A November note by the Executive Director [UNEP/GC.25/5/Add.1] contained the Working Group's final report, in which the Group recommended that the Governing Council adopt a policy framework for addressing the global challenges posed by mercury at its twenty-fifth (2009) session. Possible elements of such a framework, which were outlined in an annex to the report, included priorities identified by the Council in its 2007 decision on mercury; the range of possible response measures identified by the Working Group; and other actions related to the implementation and administration of the framework. The elements reflected the special needs and situations of developing countries and countries with economies in transition. The Working Group identified two options for implementing the elements of the mercury policy framework: adoption by Governments of a new, legally binding mercury convention, and enhanced voluntary measures. Possible components of such measures would build on existing activities, including the UNEP mercury programme and Global Mercury Partnership; existing legal instruments; SAICM; and a proposed new voluntary instrument, the Programmatic and Organizational Structure on Mercury.

In response to a 2007 Governing Council decision on mercury [YUN 2007, p. 1078], the December report of the Executive Director on chemicals man-

agement [UNEP/GC.25/5] contained information on UNEP activities related to mercury. Switzerland and the United States provided funding for a project to investigate the possibility of closing the last exporting primary mercury mine, located in Kyrgyzstan. The UNEP Chemicals Branch, together with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research and the UNEP Global Resource Information Database office, located in Arendal, Norway, assisted in preparing a technical report on the mine. Information on the market and social and economic effects of the control of mercury pollution was collected and analysed by a project conducted by the Nordic Council of Ministers. The project report [UNEP(DTIE)/Hg/OEWG.2/INF/7] was considered by the second meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Mercury (see below). Norway supported a pilot project to investigate suitable sites for the sound storage of mercury in Asia and Latin America. The export of mercury and mercury compounds from the European Union would be prohibited from 15 March 2011. In the United States, the federal sale and export of elemental mercury was banned with immediate effect, and all exports of elemental mercury would be banned as at 1 January 2013.

The UNEP secretariat prepared a report on the supply of and demand for mercury. The report analysed the projected demand for mercury until 2020 and potential limitations on supply over that period. UNEP, with the support of Sweden and the United States, undertook a number of country-level projects to develop inventories of mercury uses and emissions. The inventories enabled countries to develop national action plans to tackle issues related to mercury. The Executive Director's report also described progress in strengthening the UNEP Global Mercury Partnership.

A December note by the Executive Director [UNEP/GC.25/INF/27] provided additional information on activities undertaken to strengthen the Global Mercury Partnership. UNEP, in consultation with Governments and stakeholders, developed an overarching framework for the Partnership, which was finalized at a Partnership meeting (Geneva, 1–3 April). The meeting report and the overarching framework were annexed to the note. The framework established an overall goal for the Partnership: to protect human health and the global environment from the release of mercury and its compounds by minimizing and, where feasible, ultimately eliminating global anthropogenic mercury releases to air, water and land. It also established a partnership advisory group to encourage the work of the partnership areas; review the partnership area business plans; report to the Executive Director on progress; communicate overarching issues and lessons learned while promoting synergy and collabo-

ration; and report on Partnership activities. Business plans were drafted for six partnership areas: artisanal and small-scale gold mining; mercury cell chlor-alkali production; mercury air transport and fate research; mercury-containing products; mercury releases from coal combustion; and mercury waste management. The note highlighted activities in each of the areas.

Harmful products

In response to Economic and Social Council decision 2007/264 [YUN 2007, p. 1079], the Secretary-General in May submitted a report [A/63/76-E/2008/54] on products harmful to health and the environment. The report presented the views of Member States and intergovernmental entities on the continued usefulness for Member States of the Consolidated List of Products Whose Consumption and/or Sale have been Banned, Withdrawn, Severely Restricted or Not Approved by Governments [YUN 1982, p. 1010]. The Secretary-General concluded that the lack of response from any intergovernmental entity dealing with the issue, except FAO, and the few responses received from Member States pointed towards the diminishing value of the List. He recommended that the Council consider recommending the elimination of the mandate of regularly updating the List, as contained in General Assembly resolution 37/137 [ibid., p. 1011].

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ACTION

On 23 July [meeting 41], the Economic and Social Council adopted **resolution 2008/13** [draft: E/2008/L.21] without vote [agenda item 13 (e)].

Protection against products harmful to health and the environment

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling its decision 2007/264 of 27 July 2007, in which it requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with Member States and relevant intergovernmental entities, to evaluate the continued usefulness for the Member States of the Consolidated List of Products Whose Consumption and/or Sale Have Been Banned, Withdrawn, Severely Restricted or Not Approved by Governments and to report to the Council at its substantive session of 2008, and taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on products harmful to health and the environment,

1. *Invites* the United Nations Environment Programme to continue updating the chemicals volume of the Consolidated List of Products Whose Consumption and/or Sale Have Been Banned, Withdrawn, Severely Restricted or Not Approved by Governments and to report to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session in 2010;

2. *Invites* the World Health Organization to continue updating the pharmaceuticals volume of the Consolidated List and to report to the Council at its substantive session of 2010.

Persistent organic pollutants

As at 31 December, 161 States and the EU were parties to the 2001 Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) [YUN 2001, p. 971], which entered into force in 2004 [YUN 2004, p. 1066].

The Conference of the Parties to the Convention did not meet in 2008.

The fourth meeting of the Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee (Geneva, 13–17 October) [UNEP/POPS/POPRC.4/15] adopted risk management evaluations for commercial octabromodiphenyl ether; pentachlorobenzene; and alpha and beta hexachlorocyclohexane. Other decisions related to endosulfan; conflicts of interest on the part of members of the Committee; the Committee's terms of reference; and the effective participation of the parties to the Stockholm Convention in the Committee's work. The Committee made recommendations to the Conference of the Parties pertaining to commercial pentabromodiphenyl ether; chlordane; hexabromobiphenyl; lindane, alpha hexachlorocyclohexane and beta hexachlorocyclohexane; perfluorooctane sulfonate; commercial octabromodiphenyl ether; and pentachlorobenzene.

Hazardous wastes

As at 31 December, 171 States and the EU were parties to the 1989 Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal [YUN 1989, p. 420], which entered into force in 1992 [YUN 1992, p. 685]. The 1995 amendment to the Convention [YUN 1995, p. 1333], not yet in force, had been ratified, accepted or approved by 64 parties. The number of parties to the 1999 Basel Protocol on Liability and Compensation for Damage Resulting from Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal [YUN 1999, p. 998] rose to nine.

The second meeting of the Expanded Bureau of the eighth (2006) meeting [YUN 2006, p. 1248] of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention (Geneva, 26–27 February) [UNEP/SBC/BUREAU/8/2/5] discussed the draft 2009–2010 programme budget and financial matters; the status of preparations for the ninth (2008) Conference of the Parties; commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention in 2009; implementation of decisions adopted at the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties; and administrative and other matters.

The ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention (Bali, Indonesia, 23–27 June) [UNEP/CHW.9/39] adopted the Bali Declaration on Waste Management for Human Health and Livelihood, in which ministers and other heads of delegations from the parties to the Convention and other

States reaffirmed their commitment to the principles and purposes of the Convention and to sustainable development, including the principles set out in Agenda 21 [YUN 1992, p. 672], adopted by the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development [ibid., p. 670]. They also called on international and regional partners to support and enhance the implementation of the Basel Convention at the bilateral, regional and global levels.

The Secretary-General, in his message to the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties at its high-level segment (26–27 June), said that the Convention, by establishing the principle of environmentally sound management of hazardous and other wastes, was a key to pursuing environmental sustainability and the MDGs. In order to reach those targets, all States should provide the necessary political commitment and resources to the Convention, and integrate efforts to carry out its provisions into the broader campaign for sustainable development. The United Nations would continue to take an active role in meeting the global waste challenge.

The Conference of the Parties invited the parties to take into consideration the statement of the President of the ninth meeting of the Conference. It adopted—as an extraordinary, one-time measure—a three-year budget cycle for the 2009–2011 period in order to facilitate synchronization of the budget cycle of the Basel Convention with those of the 1998 Rotterdam Convention [YUN 1998, p. 997] and the 2001 Stockholm Convention [YUN 2001, p. 971]; and approved programme activities and the programme budget for the Basel Convention Trust Fund for 2009, 2010 and 2011. It also approved the membership and work programme for 2009–2011 of the Committee for Administering the Mechanism for Promoting Implementation and Compliance of the Basel Convention. The Conference adopted the Convention's workplan for the environmentally sound management of electrical and electronic waste (e-waste); the Convention Partnership Programme workplan for 2009–2011; and the work programme of the Open-ended Working Group for 2009–2011. The Conference also adopted decisions on the Strategic Plan and new strategic framework for the implementation of the Convention; the review of the operation of the Convention's regional and coordinating centres; a proposal for establishing a regional centre for South Asia in the South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme; the Mobile Phone Partnership Initiative; the Partnership for Action on Computing Equipment; cooperation and coordination among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions; international cooperation and coordination; cooperation between the Basel Convention and the International Maritime Organization; national reporting of data on transboundary

movements of hazardous wastes and other wastes; the environmentally sound management of used tyres; technical guidelines on the environmentally sound management of mercury wastes; POPs; the review of technical guidelines on the environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes; and the review of work on the guidance papers on hazard characteristics H10 and H11. Further decisions dealt with cooperation with the World Customs Organization and its Harmonized System Committee; harmonization and coordination; national classification and control procedures for the import of wastes contained in annex IX to the Convention; the Trust Fund to Assist Developing and Other Countries in Need of Assistance in the Implementation of the Convention; national legislation and other measures to implement the Convention and combat illegal traffic; the Protocol on Liability and Compensation; interpretation of article 17 of the Convention; national definitions of hazardous wastes; agreements and arrangements under article 11 of the Convention; the designation of competent authorities and focal points for the Convention; the dismantling of ships; and administrative matters.

Waste management

The UNEP Governing Council, at its tenth special session in February, had before it a report of the Executive Director on waste management [UNEP/GCSS.X/7], submitted in response to a 2007 Council decision [YUN 2007, p. 1080]. The report stated that the rapid increase in the volume and types of solid waste and hazardous waste generation, due mainly to economic growth, urbanization and industrialization, represented a growing problem for national and local governments, as well as municipal authorities. UNEP, in collaboration with its partners, intended to intensify and strengthen its waste management activities. In support of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building [YUN 2004, p. 1040], adopted by the Council in 2005 [YUN 2005, p. 1135], UNEP activities would focus on capacity-building and support for technology identification, assessment and implementation. The report reviewed work being carried out or planned by relevant organizations, institutions, forums and processes in the field of waste management, and aimed to identify needs and gaps. The activities and programmes of international organizations were assessed to identify areas requiring further work to assist countries in improving their waste management systems. The analysis addressed needs at the policy and regulatory, technical, financial, social and institutional levels, and generally referred to situations in developing countries. Nuclear and space wastes and wastes linked to chemical weapons were not covered in the analysis, as special management systems for such wastes were set up and strictly controlled by Govern-

ments. The report provided recommendations on how to bridge gaps in waste management and outlined the outcomes of the process of cooperation between UNEP and other organizations.

An addendum [UNEP/GC.25/5/Add.2] to the November report of the Executive Director on chemicals management (see p. 1171) contained a report on waste management, submitted in response to the Governing Council's February decision on chemicals management (see p. 1170). The report reviewed work by organizations that carried out or were planning waste management activities, set out recommendations and provided information on cooperation between UNEP and other organizations.

Notes by the Executive Director [UNEP/GCSS.X/INF/6, UNEP/GC.25/INF/29] contained information on the waste management activities and programmes of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), OECD, the secretariat for the Basel Convention, UNDP, UNEP, UN-Habitat, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the World Bank.

Other matters

Environmental Law

The meeting of senior government officials expert in environmental law to prepare a fourth Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law (Montevideo Programme IV) (Nairobi, 29 September–3 October) [UNEP/Env.Law/MTV4/IG/2/2] adopted the draft fourth Programme [UNEP/GC.25/INF/15], which was annexed to the meeting's report. The draft fourth Programme contained 27 programme areas. It proposed objectives, strategies and actions to increase the effectiveness of environmental law, including in the areas of implementation, compliance and enforcement; capacity-building; prevention and mitigation of and compensation for environmental damage; avoidance and settlement of international disputes; the strengthening and development of international environmental law; harmonization, coordination and synergies of relevant institutions; public participation and access to information; information technology; governance; and other means. The draft programme also addressed issues related to conservation, management and sustainable use of natural resources; challenges for environmental law; and relationships between the environment and other fields, including human rights, trade, security and military activities. The draft programme was developed by UNEP in conjunction with senior advisers and reviewed by the consultative meeting of Government officials and experts on the Programme

(Nairobi, 26–30 November 2007) [UNEP/Env.Law/MTV4/IG/1/4].

In an October report [UNEP/GC.25/11], the Executive Director submitted to the Governing Council information for its consideration in 2009 and suggested action on the draft fourth Programme.

An October note by the Executive Director [UNEP/GC.25/INF/15/Add.2] contained the report of the consultative meeting of Government officials and experts to review and further develop the draft guidelines for developing national legislation on access to information, public participation and access to justice in environmental matters (Nairobi, 20–21 June), and the draft guidelines on the topic. An addendum [UNEP/GC.25/11/Add.1] contained information and suggested action on the draft guidelines.

A November note by the Executive Director [UNEP/GC.25/INF/15/Add.3] contained the report of the consultative meeting of Government officials and experts to review and further develop draft guidelines for developing national legislation on liability, response action and compensation for damage caused by activities dangerous to the environment (Nairobi, 18–19 June), and the draft guidelines on the topic. An addendum [UNEP/GC.25/11/Add.2] contained information and suggested action on the draft guidelines.

Human settlements

Follow-up on the 1996 UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II)

In August [A/63/291], the Secretary-General, in response to General Assembly resolution 62/198 [YUN 2007, p. 1083], reported on the implementation the Habitat Agenda [YUN 1996, p. 994], adopted by the 1996 United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) [ibid., p. 992], and on the strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat). In 2008, the increasing importance of the human settlements dimension of sustainable development was underscored by a rapid rise in food and energy prices; growing awareness of the consequences of climate change; the financial crisis associated with the collapse of the sub-prime mortgage market; and devastating natural disasters in a number of countries. UN-Habitat studies showed that levels of inequality in cities were rising across the globe. Levels of urbanization and city size were not the key determinants of the quantity of greenhouse gas emissions; rather, consumption patterns and lifestyles with regard to land-use and urban sprawl played a more critical role.

In December, the Committee of Permanent Representatives—the subsidiary body of the UN-Habitat Governing Council—endorsed an action plan for implementing the 2008–2013 UN-Habitat Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan, which was approved by the Governing Council in 2007 [YUN 2007, p. 1086]. The anticipated outcomes of the Plan's start-up phase included: a revised and updated set of substantive policies and strategies spearheaded by a global campaign on sustainable development; an enhanced normative and operational framework to provide policy and operational support services to Member States in attaining the human settlements-related MDGs; and a series of institutional reforms for the progressive realization of excellence in management. The new Global Campaign for Sustainable Urbanization merged two previous campaigns on secure tenure and urban governance, and addressed the adaptation and mitigation challenges of climate change. It was conceived as an advocacy tool to help UN-Habitat raise awareness of the need to include the urbanization and urban poverty agendas in national development plans and priorities, and disseminate a set of policy recommendations to Member States in support of socially inclusive and environmentally sound human settlements development. The Campaign was accompanied by a normative and operational framework that combined policy recommendations and tools emanating from the Campaign for Sustainable Urbanization with services to support the efforts of Member States, UN country teams and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework in attaining the human settlements-related MDGs.

UN-Habitat developed a methodology and proposed integrated approaches to slum upgrading and water and sanitation, including working with international and regional financial institutions, the private sector and domestic financial institutions. Collaboration with the African Development Bank (AfDB) was instrumental in facilitating investment flows into African cities for basic infrastructure and services; joint activities generated over \$250 million in pipeline investments. A partnership with AfDB and the East African Community provided a framework of collaboration to expand the Lake Victoria Region Water and Sanitation Initiative in an additional 15 towns in five countries. In India, four cities of Madhya Pradesh state benefited from a \$181 million loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) based on the role of UN-Habitat in supporting reforms in the water and sanitation sector. In Asia, UN-Habitat was engaged in 47 towns and cities in five countries and was expanding its activities to Indonesia and Cambodia. In China, UN-Habitat forged a partnership with the city of Nanjing for a diagnostic study that became the basis for follow-up investment by ABD to improve the city's water and sanitation sector. In Iraq, it part-

nered with the International Finance Corporation to study and address local housing supply constraints. In Latin America and the Caribbean, UN-Habitat formed a strategic partnership with the Inter-American Development Bank to support the Water for Cities programme.

The UN-Habitat Slum Upgrading Facility continued to field-test innovative financing mechanisms in four pilot countries: Ghana, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and the United Republic of Tanzania. UN-Habitat and the Committee of Permanent Representatives approved a set of operational procedures for engaging in the experimental reimbursable seeding operations activities approved by the Governing Council in 2007 [YUN 2007, p. 1088]. The procedures would be used by a steering and monitoring committee to select pilot projects for leveraging seed capital with domestic capital to finance pro-poor housing and urban development. A micro-mortgage financing initiative for low-income housing in developing countries, starting in Latin American cities, was launched in partnership with the Global Housing Foundation and the Merrill Lynch firm. The partnership's objective was to offer the working poor segment of the world's 1 billion slum dwellers an opportunity to own a home financed through micro-mortgage instruments and, in the process, help develop the local economy.

Following the Governing Council's approval in 2007 of the guidelines on decentralization [YUN 2007, p. 1087], UN-Habitat worked closely with Habitat Agenda partners to support interested Member States in undertaking policy and institutional reform. Two meetings of the Advisory Group of Experts on Decentralization were convened in India and Norway in 2008 to develop a strategic framework for launching support services for the implementation of the guidelines. The resulting implementation strategy consisted of four major components: advocacy and norm-setting; capacity-building and institutional development; networking and synergy building with key stakeholders; and monitoring and assessment.

The UN-Habitat Executive Director was appointed to the WHO Commission on the Social Determinants of Health. UN-Habitat and WHO developed a framework for collaboration, focusing on generating evidence on urban health inequities; setting up urban thematic groups at the national level; establishing a city-to-city learning facility on urban health; and working jointly towards a global forum on urban health in 2010. In 2008, the Province of Gangwon, Republic of Korea, and UN-Habitat launched the International Urban Training Centre. The Centre was established to build the capacity of cities and towns nationally and in the Asian and Pacific region in support of sustainable urbanization. UN-Habitat was implementing an approach whereby populations affected

by disasters were placed at the centre of the recovery and reconstruction process. In the Asia and Pacific region, a seamless process between disaster relief and recovery was implemented in a number of countries, including Afghanistan, Indonesia, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Pakistan. In Somalia, interventions by UN-Habitat and an inter-agency group helped more than 50,000 internally displaced persons regain a permanent home, access basic services and begin to restore their livelihoods.

Contributions to the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation reached an all-time high of \$153.3 million in 2007 as compared to \$126.0 million in 2006. Non-earmarked contributions increased by over 70 per cent, from \$10.2 million in 2006 to \$17.6 million received from 36 Governments in 2007. Earmarked contributions—funding intended for a theme, a region, a country or a project—amounted to \$135.7 million. The imbalance between earmarked and non-earmarked contributions remained a challenge. In April 2008, an initial contribution of \$2.9 million was received for experimental reimbursable seeding operations as at 31 December 2007.

The Secretary-General stated that the Habitat Agenda was important for addressing some of the underlying causes of global trends such as climate change and the rise in food and fuel prices and for mitigating their social, economic and environmental consequences. The experimental reimbursable seeding operations would take place simultaneously with the 2008–2013 Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan and over a similar period of time. The Human Settlements Foundation offered a unique opportunity for Member States to reduce urban poverty. Voluntary contributions to the Foundation would enable local partners to combine grants for technical assistance with reimbursable seeding operations. In that regard, the adoption of the principle of assessed voluntary indicative scale of contributions would facilitate the mobilization of resources and the broadening of the donor base. Governments and other entities were encouraged to contribute to the capitalization of UN-Habitat and the Human Settlements Foundation as an effective means of providing financial and seed capital to slum upgrading, slum prevention and pro-poor water and sanitation in urban areas.

A progress report of the Executive Director [HSP/GC/22/2/Add.2] reviewed progress made in implementing the Medium-Term Strategic and Institutional Plan for 2008–2013.

Coordinated implementation of Habitat Agenda

In response to a 2007 Economic and Social Council decision [YUN 2006, p. 1251], the Secretary-General submitted a May report [E/2008/64] on the

coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda. The report highlighted major new developments and milestones in the implementation of the Agenda and underscored the increasing awareness on the part of the international community of the issues and challenges associated with rapid urbanization, including the consequences for attaining the MDGs. It discussed the decisions of the twenty-first (2007) session of the UN-Habitat Governing Council, including the approval of the 2008–2013 Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan [YUN 2007, p. 1086]; emerging responses to the challenges of rapid urbanization; human settlements and crises; and the participation and contribution of UN-Habitat to “Delivering as one” at the country level, in response to the recommendations contained in the 2006 report of the High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment [YUN 2006, p. 1584].

The Secretary-General concluded that the robust response to the coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda and related MDGs was a strong indication of the coming of age of the urban agenda. The unprecedented increase in collaboration, coordination, partnerships and networking covered all aspects of the Agenda at all levels, including advocacy and knowledge generation, capacity-building and resource mobilization to expand pilot initiatives and prepare for follow-up investment. The key contributing factors to the growing awareness and recognition were rooted in the realization that the urbanization of poverty and social exclusion was becoming a major challenge to the attainment of internationally agreed development goals and to sustainable development itself. Major global challenges underscored the importance of addressing the social, economic and environmental consequences of urbanization. Trends in rapid urbanization would place further pressure on the demand for energy, including biofuels, thus affecting the pricing of both energy and food. A concerted and integrated approach to the social, economic and environmental challenges of rapid urbanization was required. For such an approach to become effective, it was proposed that the Council include sustainable urbanization, with a major focus on urban poverty, as a cross-cutting issue to complement and reinforce follow-up within the social, economic and environmental pillars of sustainable development.

On 23 July, the Economic and Social Council, by **decision 2008/239**, took note of Secretary-General’s report; decided to transmit it to the General Assembly for consideration at its sixty-third (2008) session; and requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda to the Council in 2009.

In response to the Council’s decision, the Secretary-General, by a September note [A/63/353], transmitted his May report to the Assembly.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 19 December [meeting 72], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Second Committee [A/63/415], adopted **resolution 63/221** without vote [agenda item 50].

Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 3327(XXIX) of 16 December 1974, 32/162 of 19 December 1977, 34/115 of 14 December 1979, 56/205 and 56/206 of 21 December 2001, 57/275 of 20 December 2002, 58/226 and 58/227 of 23 December 2003, 59/239 of 22 December 2004, 60/203 of 22 December 2005, 61/206 of 20 December 2006 and 62/198 of 19 December 2007,

Taking note of Economic and Social Council resolutions 2002/38 of 26 July 2002 and 2003/62 of 25 July 2003 and Council decisions 2004/300 of 23 July 2004, 2005/298 of 26 July 2005, 2006/247 of 27 July 2006, 2007/249 of 26 July 2007 and 2008/239 of 23 July 2008,

Recalling the goal contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration of achieving a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum-dwellers by 2020 and the goal contained in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (“Johannesburg Plan of Implementation”) to halve, by 2015, the proportion of people who lack access to safe drinking water and sanitation,

Recalling also the Habitat Agenda, the Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development,

Recalling further the 2005 World Summit Outcome, which calls upon the States Members of the United Nations to achieve significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum-dwellers by 2020, recognizing the urgent need for the provision of increased resources for affordable housing and housing-related infrastructure, prioritizing slum prevention and slum upgrading, and to encourage support for the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation and its Slum Upgrading Facility,

Recognizing the negative impact of environmental degradation, including climate change, desertification and loss of biodiversity, on human settlements,

Recognizing also that the current financial crisis could negatively affect the ability of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) to mobilize resources and promote the use of incentives and market measures as well as the mobilization of domestic and international financial resources for supporting private sector investment in affordable housing,

Noting the important contribution of UN-Habitat, within its mandate, to more cost-effective transitions between emergency relief, recovery and reconstruction, and also welcoming the decision to admit UN-Habitat to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee,

Recognizing the significance of the urban dimension of poverty eradication and the need to integrate water and sanitation and other issues within a comprehensive framework for sustainable development,

Recognizing also the importance of decentralization policies for achieving sustainable human settlements development in line with the Habitat Agenda and the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals,

Noting the progress so far made by UN-Habitat in the implementation of its Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan for the period 2008–2013,

Welcoming the efforts of UN-Habitat, as a non-resident agency and through its national Habitat programme managers, in helping programme countries to mainstream the Habitat Agenda in their development frameworks,

Expressing its appreciation to the Government of China and the city of Nanjing for hosting the fourth session of the World Urban Forum from 3 to 6 November 2008 and to the Government of Brazil for its offer to host the fifth session of the World Urban Forum in 2010,

Noting the efforts of UN-Habitat in strengthening its collaboration with the World Bank, the regional development banks and domestic financial institutions, ensuring that its policy advisory and capacity-building activities leverage investment finance to improve water and sanitation as entry point to the attainment of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals,

Recognizing the need for UN-Habitat to sharpen its focus on all areas within its mandate,

Recognizing also the continued need for increased and predictable financial contributions to the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation to ensure timely, effective and concrete global implementation of the Habitat Agenda, the Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium and the relevant internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration and the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and Johannesburg Plan of Implementation,

Recognizing further the progress being made by UN-Habitat in the development of the Experimental Reimbursable Seeding Operations Trust Fund of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation, established by the Governing Council of UN-Habitat in its resolution 21/10,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda and the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat);

2. *Welcomes* the efforts of UN-Habitat in the implementation of its Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan for the period 2008–2013, and encourages Govern-

ments in a position to do so, and other stakeholders, to contribute to UN-Habitat so as to further strengthen its efforts in institutional reform and the pursuit of management excellence, including results-based management;

3. *Encourages* Governments to promote the principles and practice of sustainable urbanization and strengthen the role and contribution of their respective local authorities in applying those principles and practice, in order to improve the living conditions of vulnerable urban populations, including slum-dwellers and the urban poor, and as a major contribution to mitigating the causes of climate change, adapting to the effects of climate change and reducing risks and vulnerabilities in a rapidly urbanizing world, including human settlements in fragile ecosystems, and invites the international donor community to support the efforts of developing countries in this regard;

4. *Reiterates its call* for continued financial support to UN-Habitat through increased voluntary contributions, and invites Governments in a position to do so, and other stakeholders, to provide predictable multi-year funding and increased non-earmarked contributions to support the strategic and institutional objectives of the Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan for the period 2008–2013 and its Global Campaign on Sustainable Urbanization;

5. *Invites* the international donor community and financial institutions to contribute generously to the Water and Sanitation Trust Fund, the Slum Upgrading Facility and the technical cooperation trust funds to enable UN-Habitat to assist developing countries in mobilizing public investment and private capital for slum upgrading, shelter and basic services;

6. *Also invites* the international donor community and financial institutions to contribute to the Experimental Reimbursable Seeding Operations Trust Fund of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to keep the resource needs of UN-Habitat under review so as to enhance its effectiveness in supporting national policies, strategies and plans in attaining the poverty eradication, gender equality, water and sanitation and slum upgrading targets of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the 2005 World Summit Outcome;

8. *Calls upon* UN-Habitat to strengthen efforts to coordinate and implement its normative and operational activities through the enhanced normative and operational framework elaborated in the Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan, reinforcing its normative activities, and invites all countries in a position to do so to support the activities of UN-Habitat in this regard;

9. *Invites* UN-Habitat to enhance cooperation with regional and subregional organizations and to consider strengthening the strategic presence of its programmes in the regions in contributing to sustainable development programmes;

10. *Requests* UN-Habitat, within the framework of its experimental reimbursable seeding operations for housing finance, and in close collaboration with international and regional financial institutions, to document and disseminate lessons learned, bearing in mind the provisions of resolution 21/10 of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat, and

fully taking into account the recent housing finance crisis, as well as other relevant factors;

11. *Invites* the Governing Council of UN-Habitat to keep under review developments in the housing finance systems in view of the current financial crisis, and decides to explore the possibility of convening a high-level event of the General Assembly on this subject;

12. *Encourages* Member States to strengthen or establish, as appropriate, broad-based national Habitat committees with a view to mainstreaming sustainable urbanization and urban poverty reduction in their respective national development strategies;

13. *Encourages* the Economic and Social Council to include sustainable urbanization, urban poverty reduction and slum upgrading as a cross-cutting issue in the follow-up to the outcome of relevant summits and major international conferences;

14. *Emphasizes* the importance of the Nairobi headquarters location of UN-Habitat, and requests the Secretary-General to keep the resource needs of UN-Habitat and the United Nations Office at Nairobi under review so as to permit the delivery, in an effective manner, of necessary services to UN-Habitat and the other United Nations organs and organizations in Nairobi;

15. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution;

16. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-fourth session the item entitled "Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)".

UN Human Settlements Programme

Governing Council

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 56/206 [YUN 2001, p. 987], the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), which met biennially, did not meet in 2008. The twenty-second session of the Governing Council would take place in 2009.

Committee of Permanent Representatives

The Committee of Permanent Representatives, the intersessional body of the UN-Habitat Governing Council, met four times in 2008 (3 April, 11 June, 24 September and 3 December). The Committee discussed the implementation of the Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan for the period 2008–2013, adopted by the Council in 2007 [YUN 2007, p. 1086], including the experimental reimbursable seeding operations [YUN 2007, p. 1088]; preparations for and the outcome of the fourth session of the World Urban Forum (see p. 1181) and the sixty-third (2008) session of the General Assembly; preparations for the twenty-second (2009) session of the Governing Council; the efficiency and effectiveness of the UN-

Habitat governance structure; and the UN-Habitat financial situation.

Board of Auditors report

In June, the Board of Auditors transmitted to the General Assembly its report on the UN-Habitat financial statements for the biennium ended 31 December 2007 [A/63/5/Add.8]. Total income amounted to \$289.9 million, compared with \$228.4 million for the previous biennium, representing a 27 per cent increase. Total expenditure increased by 48 per cent to \$250.4 million, compared with \$169.2 million for the previous biennium; the increase resulted in an excess of income over expenditure of \$39.5 million, compared with an excess of \$59.2 million in the previous biennium. Taking into consideration non-budgeted accrued expenses of \$8 million acknowledged for end-of-service liabilities, the funding of which had not yet been provided, and after the prior-period adjustment, the adjusted net result as at 31 December 2007 represented an excess of \$32 million; reserves and funds totalled \$116.7 million at the end of the period, compared to \$85.1 million for the previous biennium.

The Board recommended, among other measures, that UN-Habitat: conduct an inventory of expendable items as at the end of the biennium and account for and disclose them pursuant to the UN system accounting standards; monitor regularly its level of liquidity, in order to eliminate any potential for unnecessary delay in the implementation of projects; set up specific funding for end-of-service and after-service health insurance liabilities; disclose in its financial statements its resources from the UN regular budget and the related expenditure; establish a working group for implementing the International Public Sector Accounting Standards and the enterprise resource planning system; justify amounts relating to non-expendable property and reconcile them with values provided by physical inventories; and consider options for minimizing the manual processing done in the course of preparing financial statements.

UN-Habitat activities

In 2008, UN-Habitat continued to implement the key components of its work programme in line with Governing Council resolutions and the goals of the UN system and the international community. Under the Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan, approved by the Council in 2007 [YUN 2007, p. 1086], UN-Habitat focused on six key areas: effective advocacy, monitoring and partnerships; the promotion of participatory planning, management and governance; the promotion of pro-poor land and housing; environmentally sound basic infrastructure and services; strengthened human settlements finance systems; and

excellence in management. Cooperation programmes and projects were being conducted in 50 countries, most of which were least developed countries. More than 20 other countries were benefitting from UN-Habitat global programmes.

During the year, the Advisory Group of Experts on decentralization met to develop a strategy for the implementation and follow-up to the guidelines on decentralization and the strengthening of local authorities, which were approved by the Governing Council in 2007 [YUN 2007, p. 1087]. UN-Habitat held regional consultative meetings with ministers for local government from Africa (Yaoundé, Cameroon, June) and Latin America and the Caribbean (Quito, Ecuador, July). With the support of France, and through close collaboration with the organization United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), UN-Habitat continued to work with the UCLG Global Observatory of Local Democracy and Decentralization, focusing on the compilation of country profiles, which would enable countries to exchange information on their respective laws and local government. In response to a 2007 Council decision [YUN 2007, p. 1087], UN-Habitat established a group comprising experts and stakeholders to solicit inputs to the draft guidelines on access to basic services for all. A series of regional consultations culminated in a global meeting held on the occasion of the fourth session of the World Urban Forum (Nanjing, China, 3–6 November) (see p. 1181). The Opportunities Fund for Urban Youth-led Development was launched at the Forum. Under the UN-Habitat Youth Empowerment Programme, work continued in the Kibera slum and the Mavoko informal settlement in Nairobi to provide on-the-job training for youth through the construction of their own youth training centre. The centre would serve as a regional hub in Eastern Africa for innovative and appropriate technologies for building affordable housing.

Working relationships with the private sector marked a shift in 2008 as a result of the 2008–2013 Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan. UN-Habitat initiated new forms of global and national partnerships and cooperation with, among others, water utility companies and the real estate sector to develop new concepts for products and service delivery. Work intensified on the Human Settlements Financing Tools and Best Practices initiative, which documented and disseminated financing tools such as social investment funds, community-based housing finance and community mortgage programmes. UN-Habitat's joint activities with private sector companies sought to make use of the core competencies and comparative advantages of those companies. The objectives of such activities were to improve the living conditions of the urban poor and harness private sec-

tor capacity, knowledge and technology in support of actions aimed at mitigating and adapting to climate change.

The Slum Upgrading Facility pilot programme made progress in the selected pilot countries: Ghana, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and the United Republic of Tanzania. Innovative approaches in mobilizing formal commercial credit were being implemented to finance slum upgrading and low-income housing projects. UN-Habitat provided technical and substantive support for the second African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development (Abuja, Nigeria, 28–30 July); the Conference adopted the Abuja Resolution and an action plan that provided guidelines on financing housing, slum upgrading and urban development. UN-Habitat continued to provide technical assistance and advisory services to women's land access trusts in Ghana, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, and supported the formation of new land access trusts in Burundi, Ethiopia, Mozambique and Rwanda. Through its Global Land Tool Network, UN-Habitat worked with the International Federation of Surveyors to advocate the development of pro-poor and gender responsive land tools.

UN-Habitat continued to facilitate cooperation between domestic banks, municipal authorities and urban poor organizations to mobilize domestic capital, public investment and community savings for slum upgrading. Those efforts were supported by the establishment of the experimental reimbursable seeding operations facility in 2007 [YUN 2007, p. 1088]. UN-Habitat further expanded its partnerships with financial institutions, leveraging investment in basic urban infrastructure and services by aligning its pre-investment capacity-building services with the lending portfolios of international and regional development banks. In 2008, it concluded an arrangement with the Inter-American Development Bank to promote water quality, sanitation and hygiene education; the arrangement called for leveraging \$10 million in technical assistance and institutional reform to yield up to \$1 billion in annual investments.

The *State of the World's Cities 2008/2009* report, published by UN-Habitat in 2008, adopted the concept of "harmonious cities" as a theoretical framework for understanding the urban world and as an operational tool for confronting the most important challenges facing urban areas and their development. It focused on the key areas of spatial or regional harmony, social harmony and environmental harmony. The report stated, among other findings, that Governments played a critical role in determining the prosperity and growth of cities; high levels of urban inequality could be socially destabilizing and economically unsustainable; focused and targeted investments could significantly improve the lives of slum dwellers;

and cities provided opportunities to mitigate or even reverse the effects of global climate change, as they provided the economies of scale needed to reduce per capita costs and demand for resources.

Report to Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. In response to recommendations made by the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues at its fourth [YUN 2005, p. 881], fifth [YUN 2006, p. 935] and sixth [YUN 2007, p. 798] sessions, UN-Habitat issued a February report [E/C.19/2008/4/Add.7] on its activities related to the rights and needs of indigenous peoples. In response to an invitation made by the 2007 International Expert Group Meeting on Urban Indigenous People and Migration [ibid., p. 1090], UN-Habitat began to coordinate the elaboration of policy guidelines for Governments and local authorities to assist in developing public policies related to the challenges faced by indigenous peoples in urban areas, as agreed by the Permanent Forum and the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues in 2007. The policy guidelines would be developed for the following thematic areas: employment and local economic development; education; health; transition/settlement services; cultural and linguistic continuity/identities/ethnic mobility; human security, particularly for indigenous women and youth; and housing. The first of the planned series of policy guides—on housing—was expected to contribute to the realization of indigenous peoples' housing rights and secure tenure in the urban setting. Several UN-Habitat policy instruments and programme activities were relevant to the area of indigenous peoples, climate change challenges and mitigation. Those included the Global Campaign for Sustainable Urbanization and the advocacy work of the Sustainable Urban Development Network. In response to the 2007 decision of the UN-Habitat Governing Council on the sustainable development of Arctic cities [YUN 2007, p. 1087], UN-Habitat was exploring partnerships with the Arctic Council and other stakeholders on climate change issues and impacts on Arctic communities, which were largely made up of indigenous peoples.

World Urban Forum. UN-Habitat convened the fourth session of the World Urban Forum (Nanjing, China, 3–6 November) [HSP/GC/22/INF/2] on the theme “harmonious urbanization”. Attended by approximately 8,000 participants from 155 countries, the Forum underscored the need for policies and interventions to ensure that the growing numbers of

urban poor were not left behind, and stressed the link between overcoming urban poverty and addressing climate change. There was wide agreement that attaining the MDGs would greatly contribute to improvements in the area of affordable housing and that Governments had to provide better support for cities and local authorities in the quest for safer, cleaner, greener and inclusive cities with affordable housing for all. The private sector needed to be encouraged to do more for the urban communities in which it operated. The Forum reinforced and firmly established several of the main pillars of the UN-Habitat 2008–2013 Medium-term Institutional and Strategic Plan, including the centrality of partnerships, governance, affordable housing and services, and strengthening housing finance systems for sustainable urbanization. Accordingly, the Forum's recommendations were to be used to guide UN-Habitat activities under the Plan. The fifth session of the Forum would be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2010.

Cooperation with UNEP

A report of the Executive Director [HSP/GC/22/2/Add.4] contained the joint report of the Executive Directors of UN-Habitat and UNEP on progress made in the 2007–2008 period to strengthen cooperation between the Programmes.

Other matters

OIOS report

In response to a decision of the twenty-second (1982) session of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) [YUN 1982, p. 1441], the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) in March submitted a report [E/AC.51/2008/3] on the triennial review of the implementation of recommendations made in its 2005 report on the in-depth evaluation of UN-Habitat [YUN 2005, p. 1172], as endorsed by CPC [ibid.] and by the General Assembly in resolution 60/257 [YUN 2006, p. 1639]. OIOS found that UN-Habitat had implemented all 12 endorsed recommendations. Many of the recommendations were addressed, either entirely or in part, through the UN-Habitat comprehensive strategic planning process and the development of the 2008–2013 Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan, approved by the Governing Council in 2007 [YUN 2007, p. 1086].