

Committee of Permanent Representatives to
the United Nations Environment Programme

**REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS OF THE GOVERNING
COUNCIL/GLOBAL MINISTERIAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM FOR THE PERIOD
JULY-DECEMBER 2007 AND THE PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR
THE 2006-2007 BIENNIUM**

July-December 2007

Report of the Executive Director

Summary

The Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has the honour to provide an executive summary of the status of the implementation of the decisions adopted by the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its twenty-third session, its ninth special session and its twenty-fourth session, held in Nairobi from 21 to 25 February 2005, in Dubai from 7 to 9 February 2006, and in Nairobi from 5 to 9 February 2007, respectively. The present report covers the activities for the period July-December 2007.

The present report also provides a review of performance of UNEP in implementing the expected accomplishments and the programme of work for the period 2006-2007.

The present report is being submitted to Governments in keeping with Governing Council decisions 19/32 of 4 April 1997, 20/31 III of 4 February 1999, SS.VI/2 of 31 May 2000 and 24/9 of 9 February 2007.

PART I:

REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL/GLOBAL MINISTERIAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM ADOPTED AT THE TWENTY-THIRD SESSION, THE NINTH SPECIAL SESSION AND THE TWENTY-FOURTH SESSION

July-December 2007

Part I of the present report provides the report on the status of the implementation of decisions of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum adopted at the twenty-third session, the ninth special session and the twenty-fourth session, with respect to those decisions which facilitate policy-making by the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum. This report covers the activities for the period July-December 2007.

The status of the implementation of other decisions, namely those which call for actions of UNEP in the context of the approved programme of work is provided as an integral component of Part II, which is the programme performance report for the biennium 2006-2007.

Decision 24/1 (Implementation of decision SS.VII/1 on international environmental governance)

I Universal membership of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum

Relevant operative paragraph

1. *Takes note* of General Assembly resolution 61/205 of 20 December 2006 in which the General Assembly decided to consider, if necessary, the issue of universal membership of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum of the United Nations Environment Programme at its sixty-fourth session, while noting the differences in views expressed so far on this important but complex issue;

In keeping with decision 24/1 I, the issue of universal membership of the GC/GMEF will be taken up at the sixty-fourth session of the UN General Assembly, if necessary. Some discussions on this issue took place in the context of negotiations on GA resolution 62/195 on the 'Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on its twenty-fourth session'. While the final resolution did not refer to this matter, it did recognize the need for more efficient environmental activities in the UN system, and noted the need to consider possible related options such as the ongoing informal consultative process on the institutional framework for UN environmental activities.

Ambassadors Claude Heller Rouassant of Mexico, and Peter Maurer of Switzerland - as the Co-Chairs of the UN Reform Follow-Up Processes in the area of Environmental Governance - continued to hold bilateral discussions with delegations. Two informal meetings to seek further inputs on the Co-Chairs Options Paper were also held.

Decision 24/1 (Implementation of decision SS.VII/1 on international environmental governance)

III Strengthening the scientific base of the United Nations Environment Programme

Relevant operative paragraphs

6. *Welcomes* the consultative process on strengthening the scientific base of the United Nations Environment Programme as facilitated by the Executive Director and the valuable inputs made by Governments and other stakeholders which have resulted in the draft proposal of the Environment Watch strategy,

7. *Requests* the Executive Director to consult Governments, other United Nations bodies, financial

institutions including the Global Environment Facility, the private sector and civil society, multilateral environmental agreements, the scientific community including global observing systems and other partners with a view to improving further the proposed Environment Watch strategy as an integral part of the wider strategic vision of the United Nations Environment Programme, to report back to the Governing Council at its twenty-fifth session with a revised proposal which should include component cost estimates for work proposed for the 2010–2011 biennium and to make those estimates available to the Committee of Permanent Representatives early in the budget process;

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

9. *Reaffirms also* environmental early warning, assessment and monitoring of the state of the global environment as core functions of the United Nations Environment Programme and recognizes the potential value of a network that draws on the experience of existing bodies, including academic institutions and centres of excellence, and the scientific competence of specialized agencies and the scientific subsidiary bodies of multilateral environmental agreements;

10. *Underlines* the vital importance in a globalizing world of enhancing infrastructures and capacities which can sustain cooperation on environmental data and information and which can lead to reduced transaction costs for national reporting, natural resource accounting and decision-making and the integration of environment into development, the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements and the achievement of national and international development goals, taking into consideration existing infrastructures, mechanisms and tools in order to avoid duplication of efforts and to maximize synergies in the sharing of data and information;

11. *Supports* United Nations Environment Programme endeavours to enhance information networks at the regional and national levels;

Mapping the Assessment Landscape aims to provide an overview of thematic and geographic coverage and scope of environmental assessments activities, identify gaps and assist in priority setting. A web-accessible database called PEARL (Prototype Environmental reporting and Assessment Landscape) has been established to track assessment processes; their related mandates and their outputs (reports, technical studies, synopses, vital graphics, maps, etc.) including inventory control of UNEP-brokered assessment outputs (see <http://www.unep.org/pearl>). Activities undertaken to date include:

(a) A broad-based stock-taking exercise which focuses on building a comprehensive catalogue of all relevant assessment outputs and processes undertaken by UNEP and other institutions is still an ongoing task. Outputs may be viewed at <http://www.unep.org/pearl>

(b) During the 3 month period about 50 full text documents were added to the system

(c) An in-depth review and analysis of both national and global assessment processes in PEARL also is underway. Two consultants were contracted to undertake this activity. The purpose to the activity is to identify strengths, weaknesses and successes as well as credibility, legitimacy and relevance of these assessment processes and products.

(d) A browse function and a visualization module are operational and further development of a search and reports facilities are planned

(e) A number of national environmental authorities in collaboration with UNEP are participating in the exercise to “map the assessment landscape” of their countries. These include Uganda, South Africa, Mexico, Indonesia and Russia.

The Environment Watch proposal was updated in accordance with decision 23/1 and the architecture of the Environment Watch system was re-structured to consist of four major components (conceptual framework, assessment compact, information network, and capacity building programme/toolbox).

(a) The Environment Watch proposal was re-formulated as *Environment Watch Strategy: Vision 2020* outlining a strategic direction from 2007 to the year 2020. This strategy was presented to GC.24 in working document (UNEP/GC.24/3/Add.2) and the Council/Forum adopted Decision 24/1 calling, inter alia, upon the Executive Director to continue the consultative process with all stakeholders; further improve the strategy; and report back to GC.25 with a revised proposal including a component on cost estimates for work proposed in the 2010-11 biennium. As a result of the above consultations are currently underway with

Governments as well as NGOs, IGOs, scientific institutions and other relevant stakeholders to solicit comments as was requested in paragraph 7 of Governing Council decision GC.24/1.III, This process is still ongoing with over 190 governments and over 400 institutions have been contacted for comments.

(b) Work is on-going on the development of the web-based learning platform MENTOR - Marketplace for Environmental Training and Online Resources which will be available as a prototype in 2008. The platform will act as a portal to provide access to training resources in the broad context of Section F of the Bali Strategic Plan. MENTOR will include an e-learning component. Training workshops have been conducted on the development of eLearning material and a small number of pilot e-learning modules related to integrated environmental assessment were pilot tested in late 2007 with satisfactory results.

(c) The Science Initiative website (<http://www.unep.org/scienceinitiative>) summarises progress to date in relation to strengthening the scientific base of UNEP and the ongoing evolution of the Environment Watch proposal.

ecoMundus: Improving access to reliable environmental data and information. In pursuit of UNEP's mandate to improve access to reliable environmental data information, implementation towards the web-base platform ecoMundus progressed well through 2007 in consultation with other UN agencies, regional and national partners. A beta website is operational and is currently being evaluated. By applying internet protocols for information exchange, ecoMundus partners share data and information through ecoMundus automatically. More than twelve organisation including FAO, OCHA, WFP, CGIAR, the Mekong River Commission and The Ministry of Environment, Brazil have made over 15,000 Geospatial records available through the initiative.

The General Assembly of the United Nations recognized the need to strengthen the scientific base of UNEP. The intergovernmental consultations included recommendations such as the reinforcement of the scientific capacity of developing countries and countries with economies in transition in the area of protection of the environment, including through the provision of adequate financial resources. It noted the ongoing consultations with a view to improving further the proposed Environment Watch strategy as an integral part of the wider strategic vision of UNEP.

Decision 24/1 (Implementation of decision SS.VII/1 on international environmental governance)

IV Strengthening the financing of the United Nations Environment Programme

Relevant operative paragraphs

12. *Emphasizes* the need for stable, adequate and predictable financial resources for the United Nations Environment Programme and the Environment Fund, in the context of the United Nations regular budget, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII);

13. *Reaffirms* its support for the provision of adequate, stable and predictable financing of the United Nations Environment Programme as an essential prerequisite for the strengthening of its capacity and functions as well as for the effective coordination of the environmental component of sustainable development;

14. *Also encourages* Governments, in order to strengthen further the financing of the United Nations Environment Programme and increase the level of the financial reserve as requested in paragraph 8 of Governing Council decision 24/10 of 9 February 2007, taking into account their economic and social circumstances, to make voluntary contributions to the Environment Fund starting in 2007 in an amount equal to or greater than that suggested by the extended pilot phase of the voluntary indicative scale of contributions or on the basis of any of the other voluntary options listed in paragraph 18 of the appendix to decision SS.VII/1;

15. *Requests* the Executive Director, in accordance with paragraph 19 of the appendix to decision SS.VII/1, to notify all United Nations Member States of the voluntary indicative scale of contributions which he intends to propose for the biennium 2008–2009 and urges each Member State to inform the Executive Director whether it will use the proposed voluntary indicative scale of contributions;

16. *Also requests* the Executive Director to prepare a report to the Governing Council for consideration at its twenty-fifth session assessing the operation of the extended pilot phase of the voluntary indicative scale of contributions and the other voluntary options listed in paragraph 18 of the appendix to decision

SS.VII/1;

17. *Requests* the Executive Director to continue his efforts in seeking an increase in funding, from all sources, for strengthening the financial base of the United Nations Environment Programme;

18. *Encourages* Governments to the extent feasible to move towards contributions to the Environment Fund in preference to contributions to earmarked trust funds, with a view to enhancing the role of the Governing Council in determining the programme of work and priorities of the United Nations Environment Programme;

Annual contributions to the Environment Fund increased by more than 13%. As of December 2007 the annual voluntary payments to the Environment Fund is the highest in the last four years, as UNEP received contributions from 104 countries and the delayed payments continued to arrive.

A majority of the donor countries increased or maintained the same level of contributions in the second year of the biennium following the voluntary indicative scale of contributions (VISC) for 2006-2007. 38 countries increased their contributions, including 10 countries that resumed their payments and 2 UN Member States that paid for the first time.

UNEP invited the countries to move towards contributions to the Environment Fund in preference to contributions to earmarked trust funds. In 2007 several major donor countries already redirected all or part of their earmarked support towards the Environment Fund, making additional contributions well above the level invited by VISC. Few other major donor countries already made a decision to make a similar move from 2008. This will increase their contributions well above the VISC level and assist UNEP in efficient implementation of the work programme in 2008. Furthermore, UNEP invited several other major donors that provide substantial earmarked support to particular programme areas to consider options of redirecting part or all earmarked contributions towards the Environment Fund.

The General Assembly in its resolution 62/195 reiterated the need for stable, adequate and predictable financial resources for UNEP, and, in accordance with its resolution 2997 (XXVII), underlined 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. It invited Governments that are in a position to do so to increase their contributions to the Environment Fund. It also recognized 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.

Decision 24/14 (Declaration of the decade 2010-2020 as the United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight Against Desertification)

Relevant operative paragraph

Recommends to the United Nations General Assembly that it declare, during its 62nd session, the decade 2010–2020 as the United Nations Decade of Deserts and the Fight Against Desertification.

In response to this decision, the General Assembly in its resolution 62/195 called for the observance of the UN Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification, 2010-2020.

Decision 24/15: Provisional agendas, dates and venues for the tenth special session of the Governing Council/Global Environment Forum and the twenty-fifth session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum

Relevant operative paragraphs

I Tenth special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum

1. *Decides* to hold the tenth special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment

Forum in February 2008;

2. *Approves* the following provisional agenda for the tenth special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum [provisional agenda deleted]:

II Twenty-fifth session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum

3. *Decides* that, in accordance with rules 1, 2 and 4 of its rules of procedure, the twenty-fifth session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum shall be held in Nairobi in February 2009;

4. *Decides also* that informal consultations between heads of delegations should be held on the afternoon of the day before the opening of the twenty-fifth session;

5. *Approves* the following provisional agenda for the twenty-fifth session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum [provisional agenda deleted]:

The Host Country Agreement (HCA) for the tenth special session of GC/GMEF was signed on 14 November 2007 at the Principality of Monaco. The HCA was signed by the Prime Minister of the Principality of Monaco and the Executive Director, in the presence of HSH Prince Albert II of Monaco. The Government of Monaco is fully committed to cooperating with us to ensure successful organization of the tenth special session.

The Notification by the Executive Director to the tenth special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum was sent out to all Governments, as well as relevant non-governmental organizations, inter-governmental organizations and the United Nations agencies on 5 December 2007. Together with the notification, the scenario note for the tenth special session was also distributed, providing information on objectives and expectations with regard to the outcomes of the session and how the work of the Council/Forum is proposed to be conducted, subject to the formal approval of the Council/Forum.

The Committee of Permanent Representatives at its Subcommittee meetings held in November-December 2007, reviewed and discussed the advance copy of the working documents for the session with a view to improving the documents. The Committee also undertook consultations in preparation of the proposed Medium-term Strategy for the period 2010-2013, through its meetings of Working Group on MTS held on a monthly basis from August to November 2007.