

19/32. Governance of the United Nations Environment Programme

The Governing Council,

Recalling United Nations General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972 on institutional and financial arrangements for international environmental cooperation, including the mandate of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme,

Recalling also its decision 18/2 of 26 May 1995 on the review of the governing structures of the United Nations Environment Programme,

Reaffirming the importance for the United Nations Environment Programme to continue to be the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, and to promote the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system,

Conscious of the need to improve the governance of the United Nations Environment Programme to enable it to fulfil its mandate as strengthened by chapter 38 of Agenda 21, and further enhanced by the Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme adopted by the Governing Council in its decision 19/1 of 7 February 1997,

Emphasizing the importance of democratic, efficient, transparent and representative governing structures of the United Nations Environment Programme, with a complementary, specific and distinct role and mandate for each of their components,

Recognizing the need for properly mandated subsidiary bodies that can act during the inter-sessional period for and on behalf of the Governing Council within their respective mandates and the framework of the decisions adopted by the Council,

Recognizing also the need to ensure adequate and predictable funding for the United Nations Environment Programme,

Decides

1. To establish a High-level Committee of Ministers and Officials as a subsidiary organ of the Governing Council, with the following mandate:

(a) To consider the international environmental agenda and to make reform and policy recommendations to the Governing Council;

(b) To provide guidance and advice to the Executive Director on emerging environmental issues between sessions of the Governing Council to enable the United Nations Environment Programme to make a timely response;

(c) To enhance the collaboration and cooperation of the United Nations Environment Programme with other relevant multilateral bodies as well as with the environmental conventions and their secretariats;

(d) To support the Executive Director in mobilizing adequate and predictable financial resources for the United Nations Environment Programme for the implementation of the global environmental agenda approved by the Governing Council;

2. That the High-level Committee of Ministers and Officials shall consist of 36 members, elected by the Governing Council from among Members of the United Nations and members of its specialized agencies, for a period of two years, taking into account the principle of equitable regional representation as reflected in the composition of the Governing Council. The President of the Governing Council and the Chairman of the Committee of Permanent Representatives shall be invited to attend the meetings. No member State shall serve on the Committee for more than two consecutive terms;

3. That the European Community and other regional intergovernmental economic organizations may attend the meetings of the Committee;

4. That the High-level Committee of Ministers and Officials shall elect from amongst its members a Chairperson, three Vice-Chairpersons and a Rapporteur;

5. That the High-level Committee of Ministers and Officials shall meet at least once a year in Nairobi. Meetings of the Committee may be convened elsewhere by its Chairperson, in consultation with its Bureau, in connection with major international environmental meetings;

6. That the report of the meetings of the High-level Committee of Ministers and Officials shall be made immediately available to all members of the United Nations Environment Programme;

7. That, with a view to strengthening the Committee of Permanent Representatives, as a subsidiary organ of the Governing Council, it shall have henceforth the following mandate:

(a) Within the policy and budgetary framework provided by the Governing Council, to review, monitor and assess the implementation of decisions of the Council on administrative, budgetary and programme matters;

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(b) To review the draft programme of work and budget during their preparation by the secretariat;

(c) To review reports requested of the secretariat by the Governing Council on the effectiveness, efficiency and transparency of the functions and work of the secretariat and to make recommendations thereon to the Governing Council;

(d) To prepare draft decisions for consideration by the Governing Council based on inputs from the secretariat and on the results of the functions specified above;

8. That the Committee of Permanent Representatives shall consist of the representatives of all States Members of the United Nations and members of its specialized agencies, and the European Community, accredited to the United Nations Environment Programme, whether based in Nairobi or outside;

9. That the Committee of Permanent Representatives shall elect a Bureau composed of a Chairperson, three Vice-Chairpersons and a Rapporteur, for a period of two years, taking into account the principles of rotation and equitable geographical representation;

10. That the Committee of Permanent Representatives shall hold four regular meetings a year. Extraordinary meetings may be also convened by its Chairperson, after consultation with the other members of the Bureau or at the request of at least five members of the Committee. The Committee of Permanent Representatives may establish subcommittees, working groups and task forces as deemed appropriate to carry out its mandate;

11. That the High-level Committee of Ministers and Officials and the Committee of Permanent Representatives shall be accountable to the Governing Council and will submit reports on their work at each session of the Governing Council;

12. That, save as otherwise provided in this decision, the rules of procedure of the Governing Council, including rule 63, shall apply, mutatis mutandis, to the High-level Committee of Ministers and Officials until it adopts its own rules of procedure. The proceedings of the Committee of Permanent Representatives will be conducted in English;

13. That the secretariat shall provide documentation and information related to the meetings of the High-level Committee of Ministers and Officials and the Committee of Permanent Representatives, four weeks in advance of the meeting in question;

14. That an appropriate budget shall be allocated by the Governing Council for these two subsidiary organs. The financial implications of the present decision shall not be borne by the Environment Fund and should be within the financial provisions currently available for meetings of the Governing Council;

15. To invite Members of the United Nations and members of its specialized agencies to consider providing financial assistance to facilitate the participation of developing countries and in particular the least

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developed among them, as well as countries with economies in transition, and to establish a trust fund to this end;

16. That this governance structure shall be reviewed by the Governing Council at its twenty-first session, with a view to assessing its effectiveness taking into account any relevant results of the reform process of the United Nations system.

Other decisions

Provisional agenda, date and place of the twentieth session of the Governing Council

At its 8th plenary meeting, on 7 February 1997, the Governing Council decided, in accordance with rules 1, 2 and 4 of its rules of procedure, to hold its twentieth session at Nairobi from 17 to 28 May 1999.

The Council also decided that the informal consultations among heads of delegations should be held in the afternoon of Sunday, 16 May 1999, the day before the opening of the session.

At its 10th plenary meeting, on 4 April 1997, the Council decided, in the light of paragraph 14 of its decision 19/32 of 4 April 1997, that its twentieth session would be of five days duration, from 24 to 28 May 1999. Informal consultations among heads of delegation would continue to be held on the day before the opening of the session.

The Council approved the following provisional agenda for its twentieth session:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Organization of the session:
 - (a) Election of officers;
 - (b) Adoption of the agenda and organization of the work of the session.
3. Credentials of representatives.
4. Policy issues:
 - (a) State of the environment;
 - (b) Emerging policy issues;
 - (c) Coordination and cooperation within and outside the United Nations, including non-governmental organizations;
 - (d) Governance of the United Nations Environment Programme.

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