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**COMPILATION OF UNEP GOVERNING COUNCIL DECISIONS PERTAINING TO  
THE PROTECTION OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT**

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**DECISIONS ADOPTED BY THE GOVERNING COUNCIL OF THE**  
**UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME**  
**AT ITS REGULAR SESSIONS**

**TWENTY-FOURTH SESSION – Nairobi Kenya, 5-9 February 2007**

24/16: Updated water policy and strategy of the United Nations Environment Programme

A. Freshwater

The Governing Council.

Recalling its decisions 22/2 of 7 February 2003 and 23/2 of 25 February 2005 regarding the United Nations Environment Programme water policy and strategy,

Taking into account the policy directions for water-related activities of the United Nations Environment Programme as set out in, among other sources, relevant Governing Council decisions, the Millennium Declaration,<sup>35</sup> the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development<sup>36</sup> the outcomes of the thirteenth session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development pertaining to water, sanitation and human settlements and the 2005 World Summit Outcome<sup>37</sup> as it pertains to water and sanitation,

Taking into account the comments made by Governments on the draft water policy and strategy submitted to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its ninth special session,

Also taking into account the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building<sup>38</sup> and its relevance to the design and implementation of all United Nations Environment Programme activities,

Noting with appreciation the achievements made by the United Nations Environment Programme in implementing the updated water policy and strategy as described in the report of the Executive Director<sup>39</sup>

1. Adopts the water policy and strategy of the United Nations Environment Programme for the period 2007–2012 contained in the annex to the present decision, to be implemented with interested countries upon their request;

2. Requests the Executive Director:

(a) To use the water policy and strategy as a framework and guidance to direct the United Nations Environment Programme's programme of work in the field of water through the year 2012;

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<sup>35</sup> General Assembly resolution 55/2 of 8 September 2000.

<sup>36</sup> *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

<sup>37</sup> General Assembly resolution 60/1 of 6 September 2005.

<sup>38</sup> UNEP/IEG/IGSP/3/4, annex.

<sup>39</sup> UNEP/GC/24/4 and Add.1.

- (b) To intensify collaborative activities with Governments, relevant organizations, United Nations agencies and other development partners and to intensify partnerships with civil society, including the private sector, to implement the water policy and strategy;
  - (c) To provide support upon request to developing countries and countries with economies in transition for implementation of the water policy and strategy within the framework of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building;
  - (d) To increase support to developing countries for integrated water resource management in collaboration with, among others, UN-Water, the Global Water Partnership and regional and national institutions;
  - (e) To report on the implementation of the water policy and strategy to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its twenty-fifth session;
3. Invites Governments in a position to do so to provide new and additional resources necessary for the implementation of the water policy and strategy.

*B. Coasts, oceans and islands*

The Governing Council.

Recalling its decisions 22/2 of 7 February 2003 and 23/2 of 25 February 2005 regarding the United Nations Environment Programme water policy and strategy, in particular paragraphs 11 and 12 of decision 23/2, welcoming the generous offer of the Government of the People's Republic of China to host in 2006 the second intergovernmental review meeting of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based activities,

Noting with appreciation the important contribution of the United Nations Environment Programme, the regional seas conventions and action plans, the Global Environment Facility and other international and regional institutions in catalyzing the implementation of the Global Programme of Action while recognizing the financial constraints on such implementation, particularly at the national level, and the consequent need for resource mobilization and support,

Acknowledging the successful results and achievements of the Global Programme of Action in the period 2002–2006, particularly at the national level, and the efforts of the United Nations Environment Programme as secretariat of the Global Programme of Action as well as the successful results and achievements of the participants at the second intergovernmental review meeting of the Global Programme of Action, which took place in Beijing from 16 to 20 October 2006, including the valuable contributions made by the participants in the multi-stakeholder partnership workshops during the meeting,

Welcoming the implementation of the United Nations Environment Programme Pacific sub regional strategy as noted in the report of the Executive Director on the implementation of decision 23/5 of 25 February 2005 on small island developing States,<sup>40</sup>

1. Endorses the Beijing Declaration on furthering the implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities<sup>41</sup> and takes note of the outcomes of the second session of the Intergovernmental Review Meeting on the Implementation of the

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<sup>40</sup> UNEP/GC/24/5.

<sup>41</sup> UNEP/GPA/IGR.2/7, annex V.

Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities as detailed in the report of that meeting<sup>42</sup>

2. Adopts the Global Programme of Action Coordination Office programme of work for the period 2007–2011, as endorsed by the second Intergovernmental Review Meeting<sup>43</sup>

3. Invites international and regional financial institutions, in particular the Global Environment Facility, and calls upon donor countries to continue to support the implementation of the Global Programme of Action and to consider, as appropriate, increasing their contributions and technical assistance for building the capacity of developing countries, particularly small island developing States, to mainstream the implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities in national development programmes and budgets;

4. Expresses its appreciation to the Government of the Netherlands for its continuing support in hosting the Global Programme of Action Coordination Office in the Hague and expresses special gratitude to the Government of the People's Republic of China for its hosting of the second session of the Intergovernmental Review Meeting on the Implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities.

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<sup>42</sup> UNEP/GPA/IGR.2/7.

<sup>43</sup> UNEP/GC/24/INF/18, annex and addenda.

**22/1. Early warning, assessment and monitoring**

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

The Governing Council.

Recalling General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972, and in particular section I, paragraphs 2 (a), (b), (d) and (e) thereof,

Recalling also relevant Governing Council decisions pertaining to data, information, monitoring, assessment and early warning, (including 18/27 C of 26 May 1995, the Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme,<sup>20</sup> 20/1 of 4 February 1999, 20/4 of 4 February 1999, and the Malmö Ministerial Declaration<sup>21</sup>), and in particular decision SS.VII/I on international environmental governance and on capacity-building, paragraphs 8 (e), 11 (h) (i) and (ii), 24 and 31 thereof,

Noting the provisions contained in paragraphs 108 to 112 of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development on the role of science, technology and assessment as a basis for decision-making on environment for sustainable development,

Commending the Executive Director on the production of the third Global Environment Outlook report, following the full participatory, consultative approach as requested in Governing Council decision 20/1 of 4 February 1999, and its publication in May 2002, prior to the World Summit on Sustainable Development,

Recognizing the benefits of South-South and North-South cooperation, partnerships and networking inherent in the integrated environmental assessment process of the United Nations Environment Programme and the enhanced capacities of national and regional institutions to carry out assessments and supportive data management as a result of the capacity-building undertaken by the United Nations Environment Programme,

Underscoring the importance of international cooperation among the organizations of the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations, Governments, the scientific community, non-governmental organizations, private enterprises and appropriate national institutions in exchanging information and scientific knowledge on environmental matters, inter alia, through the United Nations system-wide Earthwatch,

Having considered the report of the Executive Director on strengthening the scientific base of the United Nations Environment Programme by improving its ability to monitor and assess global environmental change, including the establishment of an intergovernmental panel on global environmental change (UNEP/GC.22/4/Add.I),

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

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<sup>20</sup> Governing Council decision 19/1, annex.

<sup>21</sup> Governing Council decision SS.V/I, annex

1. Reiterates that further consideration should be given to strengthening the scientific base of the United Nations Environment Programme by improving its ability to monitor and assess global environmental change;
2. Invites Governments, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, and scientific institutions to submit to the Executive Director by a date specified by him their views on the following questions:
  - (a) What are the likely gaps and types of assessment needs with respect to the environment and environmental change?
  - (b) How are the United Nations Environment Programme and other organizations currently meeting those assessment needs?
  - (c) What options exist with respect to meeting any unfulfilled needs that fall within the role and mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme?
3. Further invites those providing views to address, inter alia, the following considerations:
  - (a) Scientific credibility, saliency, legitimacy and relevance in the assessment processes;
  - (b) Interaction between science and policy development;
  - (c) The role of existing institutions;
  - (d) Possible options including strengthening existing institutions and mechanisms and the establishment of an intergovernmental panel on global environmental change;
  - (e) Links and sectoral integration;
  - (f) Duplication, cooperation, complementarity and added value to the work of other assessment processes, international agencies and the multilateral environmental agreements;
  - (g) Cost-effectiveness and efficiency; and
  - (h) Developing country participation and capacity-building;
4. Requests the Executive Director to make submissions publicly available and to prepare a synthesis report for the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its eighth special session;
5. Further requests the Executive Director, following the issuance of the report, to facilitate an intergovernmental consultation taking into account available funding, transparency, regional balance and adequate developing country participation, in preparation for the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its eighth special session.

*B      Early warning and assessment process of the United Nations Environment Programme*

1. Requests the Executive Director to continue keeping under review the world environmental situation, and providing early warning on emerging environmental issues of wide international significance by:
  - (a) Producing annual global environment outlook statements on the environment, inter alia, highlighting significant environmental events and achievements during the year and raising awareness of emerging issues from scientific research and other sources;
  - (b) Preparing the comprehensive Global Environment Outlook report series, following the full participatory and consultative Global Environment Outlook approach, every five years, with the next report for 2007;

- (c) Supporting sub-global integrated environmental assessment processes, including the production of regional, subregional and national environment outlook reports, in partnership with relevant authorities and institutions;
  - (d) Providing early warnings of emerging threats of international significance;
  - (e) Supporting thematic assessments on emerging or cross-cutting issues;
  - (f) Cooperating with Governments and relevant organizations to develop up-to-date and harmonized integrated databases and indicators that provide the basis for early warning, monitoring and assessment;
  - (g) Promoting networking with relevant institutions to enhance the exchange and dissemination of environmental data and information, including through the use of information and communication technologies;
2. Urges Governments to provide additional funding for the strengthening of targeted capacity-building by the United Nations Environment Programme in integrated environmental assessment and related data, information and knowledge management, and the identification of emerging issues at global, regional and national levels.

## **II Global assessment of the state of the marine environment**

The Governing Council,

Recalling its decision 21/13 of 9 February 2001, by which the Executive Director in cooperation with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and other appropriate United Nations organizations, the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Regional Seas Programme, was requested to explore the feasibility of establishing a regular process for assessing the state of the marine environment, with active involvement by Governments and regional agreements, building on ongoing assessment programmes,

Noting that the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development<sup>22</sup> called, in its paragraph 36 (b), for the establishment by 2004 of “a regular process under the United Nations for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic aspects, both current and foreseeable, building on existing regional assessments”,

Noting that the state of the marine environment is significantly affected by activities in coastal areas,

Welcoming the fact that outcomes of the consultations organized by the United Nations Environment Programme in response to Governing Council decision 21/13, in particular the consultative meetings held in Reykjavik and Bremen, Federal Republic of Germany, on 12 to 14 September 2001 and 18 to 20 March 2002 respectively, have contributed significantly to the target set out in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development,

Welcoming the decision of the General Assembly under its resolution 57/141 of 12 December 2002 on Oceans and the law of the sea, to establish “a regular process under the United Nations for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic aspects both current and foreseeable, building on existing regional assessments”,

Further welcoming the request to the Secretary-General, in close collaboration with Member States, relevant organizations and agencies and programmes of the United Nations system, including the United Nations Environment Programme, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the International Maritime

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<sup>22</sup> *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication Sales No. E.03.II.A.1) chap. I resolution 2, annex.

Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Health Organization and the World Meteorological Organization, and the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, other competent intergovernmental organizations and relevant non-governmental organizations, “to prepare proposals on modalities for a regular process for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, drawing, inter alia, upon the work of the United Nations Environment Programme pursuant to Governing Council decision 21/13, and taking into account the recently completed review of the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection, and to submit those proposals to the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly for its consideration and decision, including on the convening of a possible intergovernmental meeting”,

Considering the need to link science and policy-making and in that context to promote intergovernmental cooperation, mobilize the scientific community and foster inter-agency cooperation in support of a regular process for reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment,

Stressing that consideration should be given to the need to ensure that sustainable capacity-building in developing countries is established as an integrated part of the assessment process as identified in the consultation process,

Having considered the report of the Executive Director on the global assessment of the marine environment (UNEP/GC.22/2 and Add.5.),

1. Requests the Executive Director to make the necessary arrangements for the active participation and appropriate contribution of the United Nations Environment Programme to the preparatory process for the establishment of a regular process for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment as called for in General Assembly resolution 57/141;
2. Calls on the Executive Director to identify existing United Nations Environment Programme marine assessment budgetary and programmatic resources that can be applied to support the regular process for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment;
3. Urges regional seas programmes and other regional seas agreements to participate and contribute as appropriate to the process called for in General Assembly resolution 57/141;
4. Requests the Executive Director to report to the Secretary-General in 2003 as well as to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its eighth special session on the United Nations Environment Programme's contribution to the regular process called for in General Assembly resolution 57/141;
5. Authorizes the Executive Director to seek extra budgetary resources, including through the establishment of a trust fund, to support the participation of developing countries in a regular process for

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