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**United Nations Environment Assembly of the
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Items 5 of the provisional agenda*

International environmental policy and governance issues

**Implementation of paragraph 88 of the outcome document of
the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development,
entitled “The future we want”**

Report of the Executive Director

Summary

The present report, prepared in response to resolution 3/11 of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme, presents highlights in the progress achieved in the implementation of subparagraphs (a) to (h) of paragraph 88 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled “The future we want”.

* UNEP/EA.4/1/Rev.1.

I. Introduction

1. Paragraph 88 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled “The future we want”, as endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 66/288 of 27 July 2012, in subparagraphs (a) to (h), sets out the manner in which the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is to be strengthened and upgraded, so that it can play its role as the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment.
2. The General Assembly, in its resolution 67/213 of 21 December 2012, decided to strengthen and upgrade UNEP in the manner set out in subparagraphs (a) to (h) of paragraph 88 of the outcome document, and decided to establish universal membership in the Governing Council of UNEP. The General Assembly, in the same resolution, mandated the Governing Council of UNEP, as from its first universal session held in Nairobi in February 2013, to expeditiously initiate the implementation of the provisions contained in paragraph 88 of the outcome document in their entirety.
3. Accordingly, the Governing Council at its first universal session,¹ in its decision 27/2 of 22 February 2013, decided on measures to implement paragraph 88 of the outcome document.
4. Upon the recommendation of the Governing Council on its new designation reflecting the universal membership, the General Assembly, in its resolution 67/251 of 13 March 2013, decided to change the designation of the governing body from “the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme” to “the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme”.
5. The present report, prepared in response to Environment Assembly resolution 3/11, presents highlights in the progress achieved in the implementation of paragraph 88 of “The future we want”. Pursuant to resolution 3/11, information relevant to the implementation of subparagraphs (a) to (h) of paragraph 88 has been provided to the Committee of Permanent Representatives through briefings.

II. Progress in the implementation of paragraph 88 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled “The future we want”

A. Governance: implementation of subparagraph (a) of paragraph 88

6. At its first universal session, the Governing Council, in its decision 27/2, decided on a range of measures aimed at strengthening the governance of UNEP. In its decision 27/1, the Governing Council adopted the new rules of procedure consistent with universal membership.
7. In accordance with Governing Council decision 27/2, sessions of the Environment Assembly are held in Nairobi on a biennial basis, starting in 2014. In view of the experience gained, in particular in relation to the budget preparation process, the Environment Assembly, at its second session, in its resolution 2/22, decided to hold its regular sessions in odd-numbered years commencing with its third session in 2017. Accordingly, the Environment Assembly held its third session in December 2017 and its fourth session will be held in March 2019. Thereafter, its sessions will be held biennially in odd-numbered years, during the last week of February unless otherwise decided, in accordance with paragraph 3 of Environment Assembly decision 3/2.
8. In paragraph 88 of “The future we want”, Heads of State and Government reaffirmed General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972 establishing UNEP and other relevant resolutions that reinforced its mandate, as well as the Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme and the Malmö Ministerial Declaration. In accordance with paragraph 3 of Governing Council decision 27/2, at each of its sessions, the Environment Assembly is to carry out its mandate as set out in the resolutions and declarations described above, as well as in the Nusa Dua Declaration and paragraph 88 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.
9. Pursuant to paragraph 4 of Governing Council decision 27/2, the Global Ministerial Environment Forum was discontinued. During the Environment Assembly sessions convened to date,

¹ The twenty-seventh regular session of the Governing Council was convened as its first universal session in Nairobi in February 2013.

a high-level segment has been held over a two-day period at the end of each session as an integral part of the session. Ministers and heads of delegation have engaged in debates on strategic policy issues, focusing on the specific themes selected for the respective sessions of the Environment Assembly.

10. The number of members of the Bureau of the Environment Assembly, as compared to the Bureau of the Governing Council, was increased from 5 to 10, comprising a president, 8 vice-presidents and a rapporteur. At the commencement of the first session, the Environment Assembly elected 10 officials, 2 from each region, in line with the amendment of the rules of procedure in Environment Assembly resolution 1/2.

11. At its second session, in its resolution 2/1, the Environment Assembly adopted amendments to the rules of procedure, including changing the timing of the election of Bureau members so that it would take place at the final meeting of a regular session. The term of office of Bureau members were also changed to commence at the closure of the session at which they were elected and to continue until the closure of the next regular session. The aim of these amendments was to enable the Bureau members to be fully engaged in the preparation of the session for which they were serving, including during the intersessional period.

12. The enhancement of stakeholders' participation in the work of the Environment Assembly has been pursued through practical measures, pending the finalization of a new stakeholders' engagement policy. Further details may be found in section H below.

13. The Committee of Permanent Representatives, as the intersessional subsidiary body of the Environment Assembly, has been discharging its mandated functions, including through its regular and subcommittee meetings and other informal meetings. The Committee, in the form of the open-ended meeting, has met three times to date, in Nairobi, in March 2014, February 2016 and November/December 2017, with the participation of capital-based representatives as well as stakeholders, in particular to prepare draft resolutions for consideration by the Environment Assembly at the relevant subsequent session. The annual subcommittee has met five times to date, in Nairobi, in September 2013, October 2014, October 2015, March 2017 and October 2018, respectively, inter alia, to review the implementation of the medium-term strategy and programme of work and budget and to guide the preparation of a new medium-term strategy and programme of work and budget.

14. The membership of the Committee of Permanent Representatives remains limited as compared to the universal membership of the Environment Assembly. As of September 2018, a total of 118 States and the European Union had been accredited to UNEP and were therefore members of the Committee. Approximately 40 per cent of United Nations Member States are not included in the membership of the Committee. Member States that have not done so may wish to consider becoming members of the Committee through the required accreditation.

15. Pursuant to paragraph 17 of Governing Council decision 27/2, the Executive Director established the UNEP access-to-information policy in June 2014. In the ensuing period, the secretariat convened a series of consultations with Governments and stakeholders, inviting their comments on the policy. Taking those comments into account, the Executive Director established the revised access-to-information policy in January 2016.

16. The UNEP secretariat continued its efforts to improve the timeliness and responsiveness to the needs and requests by Member States, for instance through the provision of relevant information, documents and briefings. However, some challenges still existed in areas such as conference servicing and documentation for the governing bodies where resources were constrained.

B. Financial resources: implementation of subparagraph (b) of paragraph 88

17. UNEP needs secure, stable, adequate and increased financial resources in order to respond effectively to the call by member States to fulfil its mandate and role as the leading global environment authority. The Programme's core resources should be strengthened through an increased allocation from the United Nations regular budget and increased contributions to the Environment Fund. Earmarked funding should complement those funds.

1. United Nations regular budget allocation

18. As a result of the analysis carried out on the cost implications of the requirements set out in paragraph 88 of the outcome document, an increase in the allocation of the United Nations regular budget to UNEP was proposed for the biennium 2014–2015 and for subsequent bienniums.

19. With regard to the biennium 2014–2015, the General Assembly approved 47 new positions and a revised increase for non-staff items, totalling \$34.4 million out of \$47.7 million requested by the Secretary-General on the basis of the programme of work and budget approved by the Governing

Council at its first universal session. By comparison, the regular budget allocation for the biennium 2012–2013 amounted to \$18 million. The number of staff under the regular budget was doubled, from 48 to 95, and non-staff allocations were substantially increased.

20. Regarding the biennium 2016–2017, the General Assembly approved an appropriation for UNEP in the amount of \$35.3 million out of \$49.7 million proposed. A total of 21 out of 35 proposed regular budget posts were approved, all of which were for the regional offices. The total number of the posts funded by the regular budget was increased from 95 to 116. There was, however, a reduction of 10 per cent of costs for consultants and 5 per cent for other staff, supplies and furniture in the regular budget allocation. Funding for servicing the enhanced governing bodies was not included in the Secretary-General's request and was therefore not included in the regular budget for the biennium.

21. With regard to the biennium 2018–2019, the General Assembly approved the allocation of the regular budget to UNEP in the amount of \$39.6 million. The UNEP secretariat did not request an additional regular budget allocation for the biennium. No request was made to increase the regular budget allocation for the Governance Affairs Office (formerly the Secretariat of Governing Bodies), travel tickets for participants from least developed countries and conference servicing costs for the governing bodies. No additional post has been funded by the regular budget in 2018–2019.

2. Environment Fund

22. The Environment Fund budget allocation for the biennium 2014–2015 and the subsequent bienniums was intended to ensure that UNEP would be able to supply the core deliverables of the programme of work and provide for a significantly higher impact in terms of outputs and more ambitious outcomes with respect to capacity-building and involvement at the regional and national levels. The General Assembly, in its resolution 67/213, urged donors to increase voluntary funding to UNEP, including to the Environment Fund.

23. With regard to the biennium 2014–2015, the Governing Council at its first universal session, in its decision 27/13, approved appropriations for the Environment Fund in the amount of \$245 million, which was reaffirmed by the Environment Assembly in its resolution 1/14. However, the financial resources actually received for the Environment Fund in the biennium amounted to \$154 million, representing approximately two-thirds of the approved budget.

24. Regarding the biennium 2016–2017, the Environment Assembly, in its resolution 1/15, approved the programme of work for the biennium 2016–2017 and approved also appropriations for the Environment Fund in the amount of \$271 million. The amount of the financial resources actually received for the Environment Fund, however, was \$ 136.9 million during the biennium, representing about half of the approved budget.

25. Table 1 compares the amount of the approved Environment Fund allocation in each biennium for the period 2002–2017 with the funds actually received during the same period.

Table 1

Environment Fund allocations and contributions

(in millions of United States dollars)

<i>Biennium</i>	<i>Approved Environment Fund allocation</i>	<i>Funds received for Environment Fund</i>
2002–2003	119.9	96.7
2004–2005	130	121.3
2006–2007	144	136.2
2008–2009	152	177.1
2010–2011	180	164.7
2012–2013	190.962	152.2
2014–2015	245	154
2016–2017	271	136.9

26. Regarding the base of contributions to the Environment Fund, while there has been gradual increase over the years in the total number of member States that provide contributions to the Fund, less than 10 per cent of member States currently provide nearly 90 per cent of the contributions. During the biennium 2016–2017, the 15 member States that were the top funding partners provided 88 per cent of the core funding; the other 85 member States contributed to the Environment Fund.

3. Earmarked contributions

27. Earmarked contributions, including to specific trust funds and in other forms, have constituted a significant proportion of the total financial resources made available to UNEP in recent years. Earmarked contributions enable the upscaling and replication of the results of the organization's core work, including capacity-building in more countries and with more partners. Table 2 shows earmarked contributions made available to UNEP (i.e., earmarked income) over the past three bienniums. The sources of those earmarked contributions include member States, the European Commission, the Global Environment Facility, the Green Climate Fund, foundations, private sector organizations and other United Nations entities.

Table 2

Earmarked contributions

(in millions of United States dollars)

<i>Biennium</i>	<i>Earmarked contributions (other than from the Global Environment Facility and trust funds for multilateral environmental agreements)</i>	<i>Global Environment Facility funding</i>	<i>Total earmarked contributions</i>
2012–2013	391	131	522
2014–2015	415	306	721
2016–2017	368	372	740

28. The amount of the earmarked financial resources made available to UNEP in the past three bienniums has far exceeded the amount of the approved Environment Fund budget. Reducing the distorting effect of earmarking on the balanced delivery of the programme of work remains a challenge.

4. Resource mobilization strategy

29. In accordance with Environment Assembly resolution 2/20, the secretariat has developed a new resource mobilization strategy. The actions envisaged in the strategy are to retain the funding of the top donor member States that currently provide the majority of the contributions to the organization; to obtain new commitments from high-income and middle-income countries that either do not yet contribute in line with the voluntary indicative scale of contributions or do not contribute at all; and to engage with low-income and least developed countries to emphasize to them the importance of making even small contributions in terms of making a difference and demonstrating political support for UNEP.

30. The objective of the strategy is to increase contributions to the Environment Fund from the current level of 50–75 per cent funding of the 2018–2019 approved programme of work and budget to 100 per cent funding of the 2020–2021 approved programme of work and budget; and to increase the number of member States contributing from 46 per cent to 75 per cent of the 193 member States by 2020, thereby reducing the organization's dependence on the 15 top donors.

31. The secretariat will develop an implementation plan for the strategy and continue consultations with member States on its delivery. The secretariat is actively reaching out to member States through bilateral meetings in order to achieve the objectives of the strategy.

C. Coordination within the United Nations system: implementation of subparagraph (c) of paragraph 88

32. Fostering United Nations system-wide coordination and collaboration has been integral to the mandate and work of UNEP. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development offers a tremendous opportunity to enhance coordination across the United Nations system in the field of the environment.

1. Intergovernmental coordination

33. The Environment Assembly, in the light of its mandate, has an important role to play in providing strategic oversight in agenda-setting, general policy guidance and coordination concerning the global environment. This role takes place against the backdrop of the current decentralized system of international environmental governance in which environmental and environment-related issues are addressed through a multitude of intergovernmental decision-making processes within and beyond the United Nations system, including in the context of the governing bodies of the multilateral

environmental agreements. The Environment Assembly, through its resolutions and ministerial outcomes, has fulfilled that role in performing its functions.

34. Interaction between the Environment Assembly and the high-level political forum on sustainable development has been strengthened progressively over recent years, including through General Assembly resolution 71/231 and Environment Assembly resolution 3/3. For the 2018 meeting of the forum, UNEP contributed to the report of the Secretary-General on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (E/2018/64). In addition to providing written input to the meeting, the President of the Environment Assembly made a statement during the high-level segment of the meeting, presenting the messages of the Environment Assembly from its third session. Through its ministerial declaration, the ministers and high representatives attending the forum welcomed the main outcomes of the third session of the Environment Assembly. UNEP regional offices also contributed to the preparation of and participated in the regional sustainable development forums organized by the respective United Nations regional commissions.

2. Inter-agency coordination

35. United Nations system-wide cooperation and collaboration have grown organically out of the needs and requests of Member States following the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and through the process of negotiating the 2030 Agenda, the 2016 quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development, and the resulting reform of the United Nations development system, as well as other interrelated United Nations system reforms.

36. The 2030 Agenda demands enhanced and agile collaboration across the United Nations system. Coordination in a time of integration means drawing on the comparative advantages of the United Nations system's diversity and specialization, delivering as one. The United Nations system needs to be a responsive provider of integrated, specialized support to its Member States, effectively operationalizing normative frameworks in a coherent and collective system-wide effort.

37. UNEP is executing its mandate of integrating environment across United Nations agendas, working collaboratively through the Environment Management Group and many other mechanisms, strategies and innovative partnerships to deliver better, more impactful results and to create synergies, strengthen collective action and maximize the potential for environmentally sound development. UNEP has strengthened its engagement with key United Nations coordination bodies and reinforced its regional presence to better serve the needs of member States.

38. UNEP works within – and as part of – the United Nations system, differentiating diverse levels and modes of engagement to facilitate and leverage coordinated approaches and synergies, and consolidating the system's support for the delivery of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

39. UNEP also works through the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination and its related mechanisms; the United Nations Sustainable Development Group and its related mechanisms; thematic coordination mechanisms at the global level and through regional and national coordination mechanisms; bilateral United Nations partnerships; and multi-stakeholder partnerships and issue-based coalitions; to enhance United Nations system-wide policy coherence in addressing environmental matters.

40. Pursuant to Governing Council decision 27/5 and Environment Assembly resolution 1/11, the United Nations system-wide framework of strategies on the environment was prepared by means of consultations among United Nations system entities with the facilitation of the Environment Management Group. The framework was endorsed by the Senior Officials of the Environment Management Group in March 2016, and launched at the second session of the Environment Assembly in May 2016. Its objectives are to enhance cooperation and collaboration across the United Nations system on environment in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and to strengthen the United Nations system's capacity and synergies to enhance the integration of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda.

D. Science-policy interface: implementation of subparagraph (d) of paragraph 88

41. In accordance with part I of General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII), the Environment Assembly has the functions and responsibilities of keeping under review the world environmental situation, promoting international cooperation in the field of the environment and recommending policies, and providing general policy guidance for the direction and coordination of environmental programmes within the United Nations system. In that regard, the science-policy interface is at the core of the functioning of the Environment Assembly, and the strengthening of UNEP requires the

Environment Assembly to strengthen its functions for promoting a strong science-policy interface on the global environment.

42. The Global Environment Outlook supports member States to uphold the work of the Environment Assembly in promoting the science-policy interface on the global environment. It presents the environmental trends for air, climate, water, land and biodiversity. The Global Environment Outlook draws on all the major global assessments from international science panels and United Nations bodies.

43. The sixth edition of the Global Environment Outlook (GEO-6), with the overall theme “Healthy planet, healthy people”, is designed to inform policy decisions by Governments, underpinning the decision-making processes of the Environment Assembly, supporting the entire United Nations system to address the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda and informing the discussions of the high-level political forum on sustainable development. GEO-6 will be the only United Nations report that offers an overarching analysis of all the major global environmental issues. It will provide a coherent picture of progress to date, the remaining policy challenges and forward-looking scenarios, policy options for achieving the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda with multiple co-benefits across the Sustainable Development Goals. GEO-6 and its summary for policymakers will be submitted to the Environment Assembly at its fourth session.

44. The UNEP secretariat has produced a broad range of other reports and assessments to inform policymaking processes, including the report entitled *Strengthening the Science-Policy Interface: A Gap Analysis*; the Frontiers report, an annual report on emerging environmental issues; the Global Gender and Environment Outlook series of reports; a global assessment of sand and dust storms; and the Global Waste Management Outlook reports. The secretariat has also provided parties to the respective multilateral environmental agreements with support for evidence-based decision-making, by providing reports on pertinent subjects. The annual Emissions Gap reports and the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, for example, are used for reference purposes at sessions of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

45. Furthermore, UNEP has been undertaking assessment work, in collaboration with partner organizations, in such areas as ambient outdoor air pollution and transboundary water systems. It has also provided inputs to the assessment work of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, and provided scientific and technical support for capacity-building workshops for the first United Nations World Ocean Assessment through the Regional Seas Programme.

46. UNEP continues to provide secretariat support to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, and the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, among others.

47. Partnerships have been strengthened through the network of collaborating centres and thematic centres of excellence, such as the global and regional integrated data centres, with multilateral environmental agreement secretariats and regional bodies. The organization is committed to working with partners in the framework of the Global Earth Observation System of Systems, including on Sustainable Development Goals indicators based on remote-sensing data. A partnership was formed to assess the challenges to global water quality, under the United Nations Inter-Agency Mechanism on all Freshwater Related Issues, Including Sanitation (UN-Water).

48. UNEP has been serving as one of the organizations contributing to the preparation of the Global Sustainable Development Report, since the inception of the 2014 prototype edition, followed by its 2015 and 2016 editions, up to the preparation of the 2019 edition. The secretariat has been involved in generating data and statistics for monitoring progress in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, and serves as the custodian agency for 26 environment-related indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals.

E. Environmental information and awareness-raising: implementation of subparagraph (e) of paragraph 88

1. Environmental information

49. UNEP works towards bringing coherence and synergy in data collection processes, develops capacity to strengthen national and regional reporting, and ensures that the most pertinent data and information are both available online and easily accessible for everyone.

50. Environment Live is a common knowledge infrastructure to connect individual efforts with collective intelligence and understanding for sharing authoritative environmental data and information. Environment Live services include support to integrated environmental assessment processes by making accessible global, regional and national data and knowledge flows, which are available as real-time maps on a web page entitled “Environment Situation Room”,² as well as indicators that can be compared and charted and scientific reports and regional and national knowledge assets, multi-media content and web intelligence.

51. The Environment Live Sustainable Development Goals Synergies portal provides an effective way to retrieve relevant indicator-level data, track a country’s progress in reporting on data and show relationships between related data pertaining to the Sustainable Development Goals and the multilateral environmental agreements.

52. More countries and regional forums are looking at Environment Live’s data streams and using the platform, including UNEP assessment reports available on the platform, as a credible data source.

53. The Online Access to Research in the Environment programme enables academic, research and government institutions to gain free or low-cost access to an impressive body of research in the environmental and related fields.

54. The United Nations Information Portal on Multilateral Environmental Agreements (InforMEA) initiative has continued to bring together multilateral environmental agreements to develop harmonized and interoperable information systems for the benefit of the Parties and the environment community at large. InforMEA provides easy access to a range of information concerning those agreements. The Environmental Law Information Service (ECOLEX) has continued to provide a comprehensive global source of information on environmental law.

55. In addition to the above online information services, the secretariat has continued to produce reports and other publications, which are increasingly made available online, to disseminate information on a wide range of issues to inform decision-makers and the public.

2. Communication

56. The UNEP secretariat has strengthened its activities for raising public awareness on global environmental issues, in particular through programmatic alignment, intensified campaigns and improved content creation and dissemination. The communication function has been restructured to better serve the different programmatic streams. Efforts in improving communication on global environmental issues are helping to make the organization more visible, relevant and accessible to a wider public.

57. The secretariat initiated a new multimedia approach in 2016 focused on social media-friendly content, shareable across multiple platforms. The new strategy quickly resulted in a threefold increase in viewership across all the main platforms in the first year. The organization’s social media presence across platforms and languages has grown and strengthened over time. It now has 21 social media accounts representing all six of the official languages of the United Nations and more than 2 million followers across accounts. Innovative digital activations include WildforLife’s morphs and the 2018 World Environment Day “Tag challenge” against single-use plastic.

58. The secretariat has undertaken a major overhaul of media outreach since the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, including the launch of a new website at the end of 2017. Its new approach has helped to insert its voice in the global media cycle and promote the organization’s high-profile new research findings, such as the Emissions Gap report, and draw attention to big events, including sessions of the Environment Assembly.

59. An increasing number of influencers and celebrities is advocating for environmental issues and promoting UNEP campaigns, extending its reach to broader audiences. New, innovative techniques for multimedia storytelling, like virtual reality, are also being tested, and a new digital asset media library to house more than 40 years’ worth of readily-available digital assets was launched in 2018.

60. The UNEP secretariat is running three campaigns to provide an intensive advocacy and social mobilization push for key issues. These include the Clean Seas campaign against plastic pollution, the Wild for Life campaign against illegal wildlife trafficking, and the BreatheLife campaign against air pollution. In addition to global awareness-raising, the campaigns have mobilized citizens, Governments and the private sector to act on environmental issues and have had a significant impact on policy change. Government action for clean air under BreatheLife is to benefit 230 million people; 53 Governments – accounting for more than 60 per cent of the world’s coastline – have joined the

² <https://environmentlive.unep.org/situation>.

Clean Seas campaign with action plans to reduce plastic pollution; Wild for Life has reached more than 1.2 billion people around the world and engaged 5 million in a deeper level of involvement through morphs, pledges and social media interactions.

61. The Environment Assembly and the issues it considers have been promoted through press releases, media partnerships, storytelling, video and visual content, and social media. In tandem with the theme of the third session of the Environment Assembly, “Towards a pollution-free planet”, the secretariat conducted a global campaign, BeatPollution, to raise awareness and mobilize action. BeatPollution successfully demonstrated the relevance of the Environment Assembly for people’s lives. The campaign garnered 2.5 million citizen pledges, while 69 Governments, 23 businesses and 97 civil society entities made voluntary commitments. The campaign reached over 100 million people on social media and is still running as the umbrella campaign for the organization’s work on the issue of pollution. At the same time, the campaign helped to enhance the profile of the Environment Assembly itself, which has been covered by over 3800 media outlets in 125 countries worldwide.

62. The UNEP secretariat runs annual events to maintain, and build on, the reputation of the organization as a leader in environmental issues and environmental agenda-setting. World Environment Day, marked annually on 5 June with a specific new theme, mobilizes millions and has seen private sector and government commitments relevant to the theme every year. In 2018, under the theme “Beat Plastic Pollution” – chosen by the host country, India – nations, organizations, businesses, celebrities, the United Nations, media and individuals united to turn the tide on single-use and non-recoverable plastics. The secretariat-led Champions of the Earth award, the highest environmental honour of the United Nations, celebrates outstanding figures from the public and private sectors and from civil society whose actions have had a transformative positive impact on the environment. Young Champions of the Earth is a global initiative designed to showcase and accelerate the ambitions of talented young environmentalists around the globe.

F. Capacity-building and technology support: implementation of subparagraph (f) of paragraph 88

63. Capacity-building and the facilitation of technology development and sharing in countries underpin the delivery of all UNEP support to countries and have been mainstreamed in its programmes of work, in line with the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building. The highlights of relevant activities during the past five years are described in the following paragraphs.

64. UNEP has continued to support countries in equipping them to adapt to climate change. It provided assistance to enable their access to adaptation finance for ecosystem-based adaptation, and to integrate ecosystem-based and other adaptation approaches into national plans. It supported countries in the uptake of renewables, and brought together first-mover financiers and renewable energy project developers to mitigate risks. It also provided support to countries to develop policies and undertake actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other climate pollutants, and to achieve low-emission growth.

65. Under its partnership with the Global Environment Facility, UNEP has been assisting a number of countries worldwide to build their capacities to meet their commitment to 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, in an integrated way.

66. UNEP supported developing countries to reduce the environment-related risks of natural disasters, industrial accidents and conflicts. It also responded to acute environmental emergencies in countries as part of humanitarian response teams. Its work included conducting post-crisis assessments to assess environmental damage and recovery needs, and providing guidance to those involved in recovery.

67. While UNEP provided environmental assessments immediately after a crisis on request from the country concerned or United Nations system organizations, it also supported countries that required more sustained environmental assistance for recovery. Moreover, it supported countries emerging from crisis as they sought to put in place critical environmental policies, plans and institutions as part of a wider recovery process.

68. UNEP has been helping countries take account of ecosystem services, and use the valuation results and scenario analysis to inform policy, assess freshwater ecosystems, water quality and water resource management, and incorporate considerations pertaining to the health and productivity of ecosystems and landscapes in their policy frameworks. As a result, those countries have incorporated ecosystem services values in their planning processes, taken steps to adopt and implement the international water quality guidelines to improve water quality, or incorporated the health and

productivity of ecosystems as an element in their policy frameworks. The organization has also enabled a number of water basin authorities to take steps to secure the health and productivity of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. It has also supported the establishment of protected areas and the advancement of ecosystem restoration.

69. UNEP provided support to countries to establish action plans to address marine litter and wastewater at the regional, national and subnational levels, which has resulted in an increase in countries' action on marine litter and wastewater. Through the Regional Seas Programme and the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities, the organization has supported countries in integrating the ecosystem approach in their efforts to sustain coastal and marine ecosystems.

70. UNEP has been supporting countries to develop national legislation and strengthen institutional measures to improve the implementation of internationally agreed environmental goals, including obligations under the multilateral environmental agreements, focusing on a variety of issues such as water management, biodiversity conservation, law for a green economy, and chemicals management. It has supported countries, based on their national priorities, to develop framework environmental laws, as well as environmental legislation in such areas as wildlife, extractives, climate change and crimes with serious impacts on the environment. It has also continued to work with and provide support to Governments, in collaboration with other organizations, to uphold the environmental rule of law and environmental justice by integrating critical environmental considerations into the elements of the rule of law, including the judiciary and prosecution sectors.

71. UNEP has been assisting countries to mainstream environmental sustainability objectives into national and regional development policies and plans. Through the Poverty-Environment Initiative, run jointly with the United Nations Development Programme, a number of countries have integrated environmental objectives into national policies, plans and processes focusing on poverty reduction. It has also promoted political dialogue and cooperation through regional environment ministerial forums and related mechanisms.

72. An increasing number of Governments, businesses and industries addressing priority chemical issues have used risk assessment and management tools provided by UNEP. The organization has, for example, been working with the World Health Organization and civil society under the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint to help countries to phase out lead paint and put in place appropriate legal and regulatory frameworks for that purpose.

73. UNEP works with Governments, businesses and industries, and civil society organizations to help them use innovative tools and methodologies to address priority waste issues. As an integral part of the pilot and demonstration projects on integrated solid waste management and management of specific waste streams, the International Environmental Technology Centre has organized regional training programmes for policymakers and personnel involved in waste management in developing countries. It has also convened regional university consortiums for the development of academic curricula on holistic waste management for professional postgraduate degrees and training for practitioners and policymakers.

74. UNEP has supported countries and regions in their transition to an inclusive green economy and their adoption of sustainable consumption and production action plans at the national and subnational levels. With the support of the organization, an increasing number of Governments, businesses and other stakeholders have adopted sustainable production and consumption practices in global supply chains in building and construction, food and agriculture, finance and tourism sectors and with small and medium-sized enterprises across a number of manufacturing sectors. It has supported a number of Governments to develop or implement action plans on sustainable public procurement, in close coordination with the related public procurement programme area of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns.

75. UNEP is assisting countries to strengthen national reporting, which it foresees will improve the access to and quality of key data flows available for decision-making. It has developed a national reporting system with support from the Abu Dhabi Global Environmental Data Initiative to streamline data collection and facilitate information sharing for multiple purposes.

G. Consolidation of headquarters functions and strengthening of regional presence: implementation of subparagraph (g) of paragraph 88

1. Consolidation of headquarters functions in Nairobi

76. The Governing Council, at its first universal session, in paragraph 13 of its decision 27/2, committed to progressively consolidating the headquarters functions of UNEP in Nairobi.

77. Pursuant to that decision, the Executive Director submitted to the Environment Assembly at its first session a report on the consolidation of headquarters functions (UNEP/EA.1/2/Add.5). The report provided an overview of the organization's strategic presence worldwide, and identified a way forward for implementing subparagraph (g) of paragraph 88 of the outcome document.

78. As defined in the same report, the following are headquarters functions of the secretariat of UNEP:

- (a) Corporate leadership;
- (b) Relations with governing and oversight bodies;
- (c) Corporate institutional relations;
- (d) Strategic decision and work planning;
- (e) Corporate management;
- (f) Corporate communications;
- (g) Coordination of donor relations.

79. As at April 2014, when the above-mentioned report was issued, all of those functions had been performed at UNEP headquarters in Nairobi with the exception of the following:

(a) The functions of the Director of the former Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (currently the Economy Division), who is a member of the Senior Management Team and the director accountable for three subprogrammes, and also fulfils corporate responsibilities, especially those related to corporate leadership and corporate management. The Director was based in Paris at that time;

(b) The coordination of four out of the seven subprogrammes, which includes elements of the strategic direction and work planning functions and was carried out by the subprogramme coordinators from their respective offices in Paris and Geneva at that time (climate change and resource efficiency and sustainable consumption and production in Paris, and chemicals and waste and disasters and conflicts in Geneva);

(c) The functions performed at the New York office pertaining to corporate institutional relations with United Nations Headquarters, including with the Executive Office of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and United Nations coordinating bodies. The Director of the New York Office also oversees and manages the Environment Management Group secretariat.

80. The Director of the Economy Division has since been relocated to Nairobi and performs the relevant functions from UNEP headquarters. Following that change, all the members of the Senior Management Team of the organization have been located at UNEP headquarters, and the corporate leadership and corporate management functions have been consolidated in Nairobi.

81. The coordinators of all seven subprogrammes are now located in Nairobi and perform their coordinating functions from UNEP headquarters.

82. The New York office continues to perform functions related to corporate institutional relations with United Nations Headquarters, in order to effectively fulfil the mandate of the organization to coordinate environmental programmes within the United Nations system.

83. With a view to improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the consolidated headquarters functions, the following changes have been made to the organizational arrangements of the secretariat since 2016:

(a) Establishment of the Corporate Service Division, replacing the Office of Operations, to consolidate administrative management functions and to safeguard corporate interests;

(b) Establishment of the Policy and Programme Division to consolidate the policy, programme, monitoring, gender and social safeguards functions of the organization as well as its engagement with the United Nations system and key global processes such as the 2030 Agenda, and to ensure coherence and coordination at the strategic, policy and programmatic levels;

(c) Establishment of the Governance Affairs Office, which includes the Secretariat of Governing Bodies and Stakeholders and assists member States, major groups and relevant stakeholders, such as the private sector, to engage with the work of the organization, and provides services to the Environment Assembly and the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

2. Strengthening regional presence

84. UNEP, through its strengthened regional presence, engages with member States on substantive and strategic issues in regions and countries.

85. UNEP has six regional offices: for Africa, in Nairobi; for Asia and the Pacific, in Bangkok; for Europe, in Geneva; for Latin America and the Caribbean, in Panama City; for North America, in Washington, D.C.; for West Asia, in Manama.

86. The UNEP subregional, country, liaison and programme offices, which fall under the regional offices and work under the supervision of the regional directors, are:

(a) Five subregional offices: for the Caribbean, in Kingston; for Central Asia, in Almaty, Kazakhstan; for the Pacific, in Apia; for the Southern Cone (South America), in Montevideo; and for West Africa, in Abidjan;

(b) Six country offices: for China, in Beijing; for Brazil, in Brasilia; for Mexico, in Mexico City; for the Russian Federation, in Moscow; for India, in New Delhi; for South Africa, in Pretoria;

(c) Two liaison offices: in Addis Ababa, for the African Union, and in Brussels for the European Commission;

(d) One programme office in Vienna.

87. In addition, UNEP serves as the secretariat of a number of international conventions and action plans and many of them contribute to the organization's regional presence. It has other programmatic initiatives, for example those related to disasters and conflicts, which also require the organization's presence in a number of locations around the world.

88. As of June 2013, the total number of staff members of UNEP was 1,118 (consisting of 633 Professional staff and 485 General Service staff), which included those seconded from the organization to the secretariats of the multilateral environmental agreements. A total of 682 UNEP staff members were posted outside Nairobi. By July 2018, the total number of staff member had increased to 1,189 (consisting of 713 Professional staff and 476 General Service staff), including 312 staff members seconded to the secretariats of the multilateral environmental agreements. The total number of staff members posted outside Nairobi had increased to 726 (455 Professional staff and 271 General Service staff).

89. Through the increased appropriations from the United Nations regular budget, the capacity of the regional offices has been enhanced to respond to the needs of member States in the regions, particularly through the establishment of the posts of Regional Subprogramme Coordinator and Regional Development Coordinator. The increased number of staff located in the regional offices has significantly strengthened the strategic regional presence of the organization. The regional office teams are still relatively small, however, when compared with the growing demands of member States, the United Nations country teams and other partners, for expertise and technical support and services.

90. The strengthening of the UNEP strategic regional presence through decentralization has also been pursued by means of the delegation of authority to the regional directors. Since October 2013, the regional directors report directly to the Deputy Executive Director, and they have become part of the Senior Management Team.

91. Through its regional offices, UNEP engages actively in the United Nations regional coordination mechanisms and regional thematic working groups. It has been increasingly engaged in the United Nations common country programming processes to mainstream environmental sustainability in the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and delivering as one programmes.

92. Despite significant progress in supporting United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and delivering as one, UNEP still faces challenges, such as those arising from the

difference in cycles of programme of work planning and budgeting processes between entities. A limited operational and staffing budget has constrained the organization's ability to consistently and actively engage in the relevant country-level processes.

93. Engagement with regional ministerial environment forums has been an important factor in strengthening the UNEP regional presence. The Programme provides institutional and technical support to the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, the Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia-Pacific, the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment. Engagement with member States in the regions has been enhanced through those forums; nevertheless, challenges remain, including adequate resource mobilization to finance successful ministerial forum meetings or similar events.

H. Stakeholders' participation and engagement of civil society: implementation of subparagraph (h) of paragraph 88

94. The enhanced engagement of stakeholders has been pursued in particular through a process initiated in 2013 to strengthen and broaden the scope of the existing stakeholder engagement policy. Although member States have not been able to agree on a new stakeholder engagement policy as yet, following consultations with the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, UNEP has put in place various new approaches to stakeholder engagement, including the following:

(a) Notwithstanding the intergovernmental nature of the decision-making process in the governing bodies of UNEP, representatives of major groups and stakeholders accredited to UNEP may participate in all public meetings of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, including its subcommittee meetings and briefings, and have the opportunity to make oral statements, including via video connection;

(b) Representatives of major groups and stakeholders accredited to UNEP have the opportunity to provide written and oral inputs to all the discussions of the Environment Assembly and its subsidiary organs, including working groups. Such inputs are distributed by the secretariat to member States and are made available on the relevant websites;

(c) Representatives of major groups and stakeholders accredited to UNEP have access to information relevant to the work of the Environment Assembly and its subsidiary bodies. Such information is distributed to member States and to accredited organizations at the same time. Furthermore, representatives of major groups and stakeholders may request access to the website and dedicated portal of the Committee of Permanent Representatives;

(d) Organizations working in the areas of environment and/or sustainable development that meet the other accreditation criteria will be granted accreditation;

(e) The granting of consultative status to a non-governmental organization by the United Nations Economic and Social Council is considered evidence of having an international scope of work but, given that UNEP-accredited organizations have to work in the areas of the environment and/or sustainable development, does not replace the need to apply for separate accreditation to the Environment Assembly;

(f) Working with international partners, including United Nations entities, is considered to demonstrate sufficient international scope of work to meet the related accreditation criteria. Non-governmental organizations do not necessarily have to prove that they have a physical presence (e.g., an office) in more than one country. In practice, this means that organizations with a mainly national scope of operations can be considered for accreditation;

(g) Back-to-back with sessions of the Environment Assembly, the secretariat organizes science-policy or science-policy-business forums, which afford stakeholders an additional opportunity to provide expert input and advice to UNEP prior to Environment Assembly sessions;

(h) Regional consultative meetings, held in all the UNEP regions, and the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum, held in Nairobi prior to sessions of the Environment Assembly, provide a unique opportunity for the major groups to come together to discuss and prepare their input to the intergovernmental decision-making process.

95. These new approaches to stakeholder engagement represent important progress towards achieving the objectives set out in subparagraph (h) of paragraph 88 of "The future we want" and are reflected in the UNEP stakeholder engagement handbook.

96. In addition, the access-to-information policy put in place by the Executive Director is one of the most advanced policies of its kind in the United Nations system, providing access to most of the information held by UNEP.
97. The Private Sector Unit was established in January 2018 within the Governance Affairs Office in order to enhance engagement with the private sector.
98. Funding the participation of major groups and stakeholders remains problematic. While the allocation of financial resources from the Environment Fund to the budget of the Civil Society Unit in the Governance Affairs Office has been increased to \$220,000 in 2018, only very limited additional extrabudgetary resources have been provided by member States for the implementation of subparagraph (h) of paragraph 88. The participation of major groups and stakeholders, including at the regional level and in meetings of the Environment Assembly, is therefore chronically underfunded.
99. In the future, it would be desirable for the organization to invest more financial and human resources in creating enabling conditions for civil society engagement at the regional and national levels, including by supporting the application of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, for example by facilitating the establishment of legal instruments similar to the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean, adopted in Escazú, Costa Rica, in March 2018.

III. Conclusion

100. Significant progress has been achieved in strengthening and upgrading UNEP, through the actions taken to date to implement paragraph 88 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, “The future we want”. Nevertheless, further action is required to tackle challenges that remain in certain areas and to continue strengthening UNEP so that it can fulfil its mandated functions and its role as the leading global environmental authority, thereby upholding strengthened international environmental governance.
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