
United Nations

A/RES/42/187



General Assembly

96th plenary meeting
11 December 1987

42/187. Report of the World Commission on Environment and
Development

The General Assembly,

Concerned about the accelerating deterioration of the human environment and natural resources and the consequences of that deterioration for economic and social development,

Believing that sustainable development, which implies meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, should become a central guiding principle of the United Nations, Governments and private institutions, organizations and enterprises,

Recognizing, in view of the global character of major environmental problems, the common interest of all countries to pursue policies aimed at sustainable and environmentally sound development,

Convinced of the importance of a reorientation of national and international policies towards sustainable development patterns,

Recalling that, in its resolution 38/161 of 19 December 1983 on the process of preparation of the Environmental Perspective to the Year 2000 and Beyond to be prepared by the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme, it welcomed the establishment of a special commission, which later assumed the name World Commission on Environment and Development,

to make available a report on environment and the global problematique to the year 2000 and beyond, including proposed strategies for sustainable development,

Recognizing the valuable role played in the preparation of the report of the World Commission by the Intergovernmental Inter-sessional Preparatory Committee of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme, as envisaged by the General Assembly in its resolution 38/161,

Recalling that in resolution 38/161 it decided that, on matters within the purview of the United Nations Environment Programme, the report of the Commission should in the first instance be considered by the Governing Council of the Programme, for transmission to the General Assembly together with the comments of the Council and for use as basic material in the preparation, for adoption by the Assembly, of the Environmental Perspective, and that on those matters which were under consideration or review by the Assembly itself, it would consider the relevant aspects of the report of the Commission,

Taking note of Governing Council decision 14/14 of 19 June 1987 transmitting the report of the Commission to the General Assembly,

Noting that the Environmental Perspective to the Year 2000 and Beyond

has taken account of the main recommendations in the Commission's report,

Recognizing the instrumental role of the Commission in revitalizing and reorienting discussions and deliberations on environment and development and in enhancing the understanding of the causes of present environmental and development problems, as well as in demonstrating the ways in which they transcend institutional frontiers and in opening new perspectives on the interrelationship between environment and development as a guide to the future,

Emphasizing the need for a new approach to economic growth, as an essential prerequisite for eradication of poverty and for enhancing the resource base on which present and future generations depend,

1. Welcomes the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development entitled "Our Common Future";

2. Notes with appreciation the important contribution made by the Commission to raising the consciousness of decision-makers in Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental international organizations, industry and other fields of economic activity, as well as of the general public, in regard to the imperative need for making the transition towards sustainable development, and calls upon all concerned to make full use in this regard of the report of the Commission;

3. Agrees with the Commission that while seeking to remedy existing environmental problems, it is imperative to influence the sources of those problems in human activity, and economic activity in particular, and thus to provide for sustainable development;

4. Agrees further that an equitable sharing of the environmental costs and benefits of economic development between and within countries and between present and future generations is a key to achieving sustainable development;

5. Concurs with the Commission that the critical objectives for environment and development policies which follow from the need for sustainable development must include preserving peace, reviving growth and changing its quality, remedying the problems of poverty and satisfying human needs, addressing the problems of population growth and of conserving and enhancing the resource base, reorienting technology and managing risk, and merging environment and economics in decision-making;

6. Decides to transmit the report of the Commission to all Governments and to the governing bodies of the organs, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system, and invites them to take account of the analysis and recommendations contained in the report of the Commission in determining their policies and programmes;

7. Calls upon all Governments to ask their central and sectoral economic agencies to ensure that their policies, programmes and budgets encourage sustainable development and to strengthen the role of their environmental and natural resource agencies in advising and assisting central and sectoral agencies in that task;

8. Calls upon the governing bodies of the organs, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system to review their policies, programmes, budgets and activities aimed at contributing to sustainable development;

9. Calls upon the governing bodies of other relevant multilateral development assistance and financial institutions to commit their institutions more fully to pursuing sustainable development in establishing their policies and programmes in accordance with the national development plans, priorities and objectives established by the recipient Governments themselves;

10. Requests the Secretary-General, through the appropriate existing

mechanisms, including the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination, to review and co-ordinate on a regular basis the efforts of all the organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to pursue sustainable development, and to report thereon to the General Assembly through the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme and the Economic and Social Council;

11. Stresses the essential role of the United Nations Environment Programme, within its mandate, in catalyzing the sustainable development efforts of the United Nations system, while fully taking into account the co-ordinating responsibilities of the Economic and Social Council, and agrees with the Commission that that role should be strengthened and that the resources of the Environment Fund should be substantially enlarged, with greater participation;

12. Considers that the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme, within its mandate and with participation, when appropriate, at the ministerial level, should examine on a periodic basis the long-term strategies for realizing sustainable development, and should include the results of its examinations in its reports to be submitted to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council;

13. Agrees that the catalytic and co-ordinating role of the United Nations Environment Programme in the United Nations system should be reinforced in its future work on environmental and natural resource issues;

14. Reaffirms the need for additional financial resources from donor countries and organizations to assist developing countries in identifying, analysing, monitoring, preventing and managing environmental problems in accordance with their national development plans, priorities and objectives;

15. Reaffirms the need for developed countries and appropriate organs and organizations of the United Nations system to strengthen technical co-operation with the developing countries to enable them to develop and enhance their capacity for identifying, analysing, monitoring, preventing and managing environmental problems in accordance with their national development plans, priorities and objectives;

16. Invites Governments, in co-operation with the regional commissions and the United Nations Environment Programme and, as appropriate, intergovernmental organizations, to support and engage in follow-up activities, such as conferences, at the national, regional, and global levels;

17. Calls upon Governments to involve non-governmental organizations, industry and the scientific community more fully in national and international activities to support efforts towards sustainable development;

18. Invites the governing bodies of the organs, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system to report, as appropriate, through the Economic and Social Council, to the General Assembly, not later than at its forty-fourth session, on progress made in their organizations towards sustainable development, and to make such reports available to the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme at its next regular session;

19. Also invites the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme to provide comments on matters concerning progress on sustainable development that fall within its mandate, on the above-mentioned reports and on other developments, for submission to the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session of 1989 and to the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session;

20. Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-third session, through the Economic and Social Council, a progress

report on
the implementation of the present resolution and to the Assembly at its
forty-fourth session a consolidated report on the same subject;

21. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-third
session a sub-item entitled "A long-term strategy for sustainable and
environmentally sound development" under the agenda item entitled "Development
and international economic co-operation".

*This document has been posted online by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA).
Reproduction and dissemination of the document - in electronic and/or printed format - is encouraged, provided
acknowledgement is made of the role of the United Nations in making it available.*

*Date last posted: 16 December 1999 13:50:10
Comments and suggestions: esa@un.org*