to achieve sustainable development. The international community needs to increase dissemination of information. Internet technology is a part of the global commons, which is rapidly evolving, and as such is an ideal tool to communicate beyond national borders and a way to democratize societies. However, information infrastructure in many countries is lacking and needs to be developed. Therefore, the conference recommending that effectively disseminate a best combination of the Internet and conventional information technology, such as radio, should be utilized.

III. Resources Management and Energy-related Technology Development

15. It is essential that riparian countries look upon transboundary river systems as a shared resource to be jointly managed in a responsible and sustainable manner, for example, by establishing high-level mechanisms for necessary management of water rights related issues. 16. High emphasis should be given to water conservation, efficiency, and sustainability in the utilization of water resources, with consideration to demand side management and through the promotion of environmental education and changing of lifestyles. For example, it might be beneficial for international cooperation efforts to make use of best available technologies and practices from Japan and other countries for saving water, utilizing rainwater, and managing paddy field rice farming and irrigation systems.

17. It is recommended that full cost accounting and externalities be taken into account when pricing resources in order to fully reflect their value. It is also essential to remove perverse subsidies and implement a new scheme of subsidies for clean technology and alternative resources that have not been fully exploited or subsidized.

18. It is essential that there are many energy-related technologies which are ready for dissemination and which are approaching competitive strength. Special efforts should be made to advance these technologies swiftly. Different varieties of technological breakthroughs for regional-based energy efficiency must be explored and established on a subregional basis, through international cooperation.

19. With regard to new technology development, it is essential to build a networking-oriented economic system, in addition to promoting joint projects of technological development across national borders and across different types of industries. In order to realize the above business field expansion, it is also essential to promote decentralized types of energy supply systems in which the suppliers and consumers are located close to one and other.

20. It is essential to change social systems in order to facilitate the transition of energy systems, by developing energy-saving technologies for appliances which consume less standby electricity, by providing tax incentives for the development of energy-saving technologies for appliances, giving tax exemption to energy supply facilities from non-fossil sources of energy.

21. The conference recommends, as an essential short term goal, to prepare conditions for early entry-into-force of the Kyoto Protocol, incorporating mechanisms such as Emission Trading (ET). It is also recommended, as a long term goal, to develop a fundamental plan of action by which the entire world community would be able to manage the risks of climate change in a collaborative manner.

IV. Urban Environmental Problems and Regional Cooperation

22. Global urbanization trends are associated with an emerging variety of urban environmental problems, including air and water pollution and solid waste management issues. Accelerated urban growth processes, factories, and other industrial complexes are concentrated in and around large urban centers and these often create severe localized pollution. Urban, also, lifestyles require more energy and resources than those in rural areas. We must recognize, however, that these environmental problems affect not only large cities, but also regional cities and those in rural areas must be treated separately.

23. For environmental planning considerations, it is important to address entire human settlement systems, including broadly defined rural-urban linkages. Environmental problems cannot be addressed in isolation, rather they must be perceived through an overall framework of sustainability, which also includes social, economic, and political aspects.

24. Of the responses to rapid urbanization and increasing inter-city linkages, the most important are those related to urban planning. Environmental considerations should be addressed, particularly in land use and transportation planning. The emergence of the automobile-dependent society threatens the further increase in energy use and air pollution. Alternative transportation measures should be promoted without delay, in particular mass transportation systems.

25. An important message coming out of this conference is the need for "model cities," defined as those progressing towards the goals of a sustainable city. In designing these cities special attention should be given to the possibilities offered by new communication technologies, more self contained communities, and lifestyles which will minimize the city's ecological footprint. The tools for creating model cities and environmentally sound technologies, both hard and soft. In this regard, it should be noted that Local Agenda 21 is now being embodied in local plans and implemented in a variety of programs. While the attainment of these goals is important to cities all over the globe, efforts, particularly those in cities of the developing world, should be supported by the developed world.

26. It is recommended that a strategy be drawn up for effective financing of the construction of environmentally sound urban infrastructure. Important lessons for urban management as an essential aspect of "governance," which is an essential component for the effective implementation of sustainable strategies. Laws, regulations, standards, administrative systems and financing mechanisms for urban environmental management must be improved. Central and local partnerships, the participation of stakeholders for planning and decision making, and human development must all be considered in hand in hand in order to create sustainable cities.

27. Regional cooperation has been promoted at various levels of government, including national and subnational levels. As such, regional activities addressing urban environmental problems are currently being promoted by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the United Nations Center for Human Settlements (UNHCS), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations University (UNU) and through bilateral agreements and other mechanisms. To further these efforts, it is necessary to exchange mutual relevant information in the case of urban environmental management. A database that would include good practices and case studies of effective implementation of successful experiences offered by new telecommunication technologies, offered by different levels of government, and as such is an ideal tool to communicate beyond national borders and a way to democratize societies.

Resolution 242 on Environment and Human Settlements*

53/242

Report of the Secretary-General on environment and human

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 52/12 A of 12 November 1997, entitled "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform*,

Reaffirming its determination to strengthen the role, capacity, effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations, including in the field of environment and human settlements, and thus improve its performance in order to realize the full potential of the Organization,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on environment and human settlements1 and the report of the United Nations Task Force on Environment and Human Settlements annexed thereto, which contain recommendations on reforming and strengthening the activities of the United Nations in the field of environment and human settlements, and conscious of the continued deterioration of the global environment and the state of human settlements, despite some positive achievements, the General Assembly, in its resolution 52/12 A of 1997, entitled "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform*,

Adopted without a vote.


1 A/53/463.

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ments, as well as of the need to strengthen the institutions of the United Nations charged with responsibility for environment and human settlements, to improve their performance and to promote coordination in the implementation of the environment and human settlements dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system.

Emphasizing the importance of strengthening the capacity of the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) in their Nairobi location and of ensuring provision of requisite support and stable, adequate and predictable financial resources necessary to both organizations for the fulfillment of their mandates, as contained in General Assembly resolutions 2997 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972 and 32/162 of 19 December 1977, as well as in the Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme, adopted by the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme, 1 in its resolution 19/1 of 7 February 1997, and the Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements, 2 adopted by the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) on 14 June 1996, including by seeking additional financial resources through broadening the range of sources of funding for both organizations, in accordance with the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations.

Taking into account the views of Member States on the report of the Secretary-General on environment and human settlements.

Taking into account also the views containing the proposal of 2001, adopted on 5 February 1999 by the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme, 3 and Commission on Sustainable Development, 4 concerning the report of the Secretary-General on environment and human settlements.

1. Welcomes the efforts undertaken to strengthen the United Nations in the field of environment and human settlements, and in that context notes the general thrust of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on environment and human settlements, and actions as taken by the Secretary-General, the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme and the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), and takes note also of the recommendations outlined in section IV of the report;

2. Requests the Secretary-General to strengthen the United Nations Office at Nairobi, in its capacity as the only United Nations headquarter in developing countries, and that, in accordance with the General Assembly's decision 55/266, to strengthen the capacity and capability of the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) to increase cooperation in and strengthen coordination of their activities, within the framework of their respective mandates and separate programmatic and organizational identities, as well as their separate Executive Directors;

3. Encourages the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Nairobi to take steps to increase the level of utilization of the Office, and in this regard strengthens its cooperation, funds and programmes to consider increasing their utilization of its facilities for their activities;

4. Calls upon the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) to increase cooperation in and strengthen coordination of their activities, within the framework of their respective mandates and separate programmatic and organizational identities, as well as their separate Executive Directors;

5. Supports the proposal of the Secretary-General regarding the establishment of an environmental management group for the purpose of enhancing inter-agency coordination in the field of environment and human settlements, and requests the Secretary-General to develop, in consultation with the Member States and members of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, the mandate, terms of reference, appropriate criteria for membership and flexible, cost-effective working methods of the proposed Assembly, with due regard for proper United Nations budgetary procedures;

6. Welcomes the proposal to institute an annual, ministerial-level, global environmental forum, with the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme constituting the forum in the years that it meets in regular session and, in alternate years, with the forum taking the form of a special session of the Governing Council, in which participants can gather to review important and emerging policy issues in the field of the environment, with due consideration for the need to ensure the effective and efficient functioning of the governance mechanisms of the United Nations Environment Programme as the main forum for high-level policy debate on sustainable development;

7. Supports the proposals for the facilitation of and support for enhancing linkages and cooperation within and among environmental and environment-related conventions, including by the United Nations Environment Programme, with full respect for the status of the respective convention secretariats and the autonomous decision-making prerogatives of the conferences of the parties to the conventions concerned, and emphasizes in this regard the need to provide the United Nations Environment Programme with adequate resources to perform this task;

8. Welcomes the proposals for involvement, participation and constructive engagement of major groups active in the field of environment and human settlements, with due consideration for the relevant rules, regulations and procedures of the United Nations;

9. Reiterates the importance of strengthening the capacity and capability of the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), within the framework of their existing mandates, in the areas of information, the monitoring and assessment of global and regional environmental and human settlements trends and early warning information on environmental threats, so as to catalyse and promote international cooperation and action, and in this context recognizes the importance of strengthening the system-wide Earthwatch as an effective, accessible and strictly non-political science-based early warning information system.

10. Reaffirms that, in accordance with its mandate, the United Nations Environment Programme should not become involved in conflict identification, prevention, mediation and resolution.

11. Stresses the need to enhance further the role of the United Nations Environment Programme as an implementing agency of the Global Environment Facility with its role as defined in the Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured Global Environment Facility.

12. Also stresses the need to enhance further the role of the United Nations Environment Programme as an implementing agency of the Global Environment Facility with its role as defined in the Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured Global Environment Facility.

13. Reaffirms the role of the Commission on Human Settlements in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, 5 emphasizes the need for it to take steps to prepare for the review of its implementation in 2001, and welcomes the proposals that the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) should strengthen its core activities and develop into a centre for excellence with regard to human settlements;

14. Welcomes the proposal to continue ongoing work in the development of indicators in the field of environment and human settlements, and in this regard stresses the importance of the need to avoid duplication of effort.

15. Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution.