Ministerial Declaration (Excerpt)*

Environment and Development

49. The Ministers reiterated the urgency of accelerating the comprehensive implementation of Agenda 21. They further emphasized the importance of ensuring that all global environmental measures and programmes are based on international dialogue and/or consensus and should not constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable barriers or a disguised restriction that may inhibit economic growth. In this regard, they stressed that such implementation should not contradict the right of the developing countries to benefit fully from the utilization of their resources that are vital for sustained economic growth and sustainable development. The Ministers also urged the developing countries to implement the Kyoto Protocol and adapt the Global Mechanism in order to address ways and means for the full implementation of the Convention on Combat Desertification, the Non-Aligned Movement in Durban, South Africa, and the Rio+5 in 1997 and expressed the hope that preparations for the year 2010 review would focus on identifying challenges and constraints in meeting such commitments and evolve mechanisms and measures to remedy this.

50. The Ministers stressed that the development and transfer of environmentally sound technologies are essential components of a successful strategy for sustainable development. Therefore, it is important to emphasize that the LDCs are unable to do so, in particular as set out in Chapters 33 and 34 of Agenda 21 and 1999/46 on the “Report of the Secretary-General relating to the principles, modalities etc., of such financial mechanisms and measures to remedy this.

Habitat and UNEP

58. The Ministers noted with satisfaction the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 51/242 on the “Report of the Secretary-General on Environment and Human Settlements” and underlined its importance to the process of reform and rejuvenation of the United Nations in the light of its expanded role and the roles of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, UNCHS (Habitat). They therefore called for an effective and speedy implementation of the resolution with a view, inter alia, to enhancing the role, capacities, effective representation and financial resources to enable them to carry out their mandated activities.

Development and International Economic Cooperation

61. The Ministers also expressed their grave concern over the declining funding resources for UNEP and the international community to exhaust all possible mechanisms and measures to remedy this.

* New York, 24 September 1999. Twenty-third Annual Meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77. See also page 216.

1 Non-Legally Binding Authoritative Statement on the conservation, management and sustainable use of all types of Forest.
The Group of 77 & China notes with satisfaction the adoption of Resolution A/53/242 by the General Assembly on the “Report of the Secretary General on Environment and Human Settlements”. The Group believes that this Resolution covers major areas of reform and rejuvenation within the UN system, with particular emphasis on the roles of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, UNCHS (Habitat).

2. The Group believes that its contribution, following the publication of the original Task Force Report, has been constructive and substantive and has been duly taken into account in the final General Assembly Resolution.

3. The G-77 calls for an effective and speedy implementation of this Resolution, so that the reform process pertaining to UNEP and Habitat is quickly activated.

4. Environmental Management Group: Concerning this most pressing issue, that demands immediate action by the 54th Session of CERN concerning this most pressing issue, that demands immediate action by the 54th Session of CERN, the G-77 wishes to express that it welcomes the establishment of the Environmental Management Group for enhancing inter-agency co-ordination in the fields of environment and human settlements. The G-77 has noted the assertion by the Executive Director of UNEP that governments would soon be consulted on the modalities for the establishment of the GEF and calls for an early definition of such criteria, so that the terms of reference of the GEF could be approved at the 54th session of the GA.

The Group believes that the membership of the EMG from outside the UN system should be appropriately balanced in order to safeguard the interests of the developing world. The Group, therefore, calls for consultations between the Executive Director of UNEP and the G-77 (Nairobi Chapter) on the evolution of the criteria of membership of the EMG.

5. Strengthening of UNO: The G-77 is pleased to note that the contents of paras 2 and 3 of the Resolution, which call for the strengthening and more effective utilisation of the United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON), would encourage greater efficiency and a larger resource base for it.

6. UNEP-UNCHS co-operation and co-ordination: The Group calls for an early, complete and programmatic implementation of para 4 of the Resolution.

7. UNEP – Annual Ministerial Meetings: The G-77 notes with satisfaction the proposal to institute an annual ministerial-level global environmental forum. The Group believes that an early decision on the agenda, venue and timing of the first meeting should be taken on the basis of pragmatic considerations.

8. HLCOMO: The Group further believes that the HLCOMO, though not mentioned in the said UNGA Resolution, has been rendered superfluous as a result of the decision to establish an annual ministerial-level global environmental forum. Hence, appropriate measures need to be taken accordingly.

9. Conventions: The Group notes with satisfaction the proposals in paras 7 & 8 pertaining to enhancing linkages among Conventions and the constructive engagement of major environmental groups in the format clearly spelt out by the Resolution.

10. Environmental Conflicts: The Group also notes with satisfaction the re-affirmation of the principle in para 10 of the Resolution.

11. Work Programmes: The G-77 calls for a clear identification of priorities for the work programmes of UNEP and Habitat, so that the objectives of capacity-building and technical assistance of developing countries, set out in para 11 of the said Resolution, are quickly brought to the fore.

12. GEF: The Group also supports the enhancement of the role of UNEP as an implementing agency of GEF and the role of UNCHS in the implementation of the Habitat agenda.

13. Finally, the Nairobi Chapter of G-77 & China believes that an early and full implementation of the recommendations contained in the GA Resolution would bring about the strengthening of the UNEP and Habitat. Further, this input will be useful for the report to be presented on the implementation of the Resolution to the General Assembly at its 54th session.