

opposition to and reconsideration of bioenergy programmes are wasteful of both funding for international development and especially of time to develop urgent solutions to the world's twin problems of rising energy costs and climate change. The statement indirectly responds to a well publicised statement made last year by Jean Ziegler, UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food, that

"biofuels are a crime against humanity" because they transform "hundreds and hundreds of thousands of tons" of cereal production into production of biofuel, leading to this year's unprecedented increases in the costs of cereals worldwide. President Lula's remarks will be summarised in FAO's report of the Latin American meeting. (TRY, unless stated otherwise.)

Late Report:

The 2nd Pew Symposium on Whales, Tokyo, January 2008

In an effort to prevent unfettered commercial whaling and to ensure the enforceability of international measures aimed at protecting whales, the Pew Environment Group (conservation arm of The Pew Charitable Trusts) launched a major initiative – a public symposium series designed to stimulate wide dialogue and aimed at finding possible ways forward for resolving the global conflict over whales.

The most recent symposium was held at the UNU centre in Tokyo in January 2008, and preceded the IWC Intersessional meeting (see page 129). It took place at a time of heightened tension about Japan's so-called "scientific whaling" programme, amid growing international concern over the future of the IWC. Holding the symposium in the heart of the main pro-whaling country gave it particular significance: not only in opening the dialogue to those with concerns on both sides of the debate and having real interest in effective and pragmatic solutions; but also enabling the reflection of a wide range of views from within Japan.

Summarising the proceedings, the symposium chairman (Judge Tuiloma Neroni Slade) stressed that his viewpoint was not endorsed by the symposium. He noted several important areas of agreement:

- the urgent need to resolve the current impasse on whaling, so that significant international resources and energy currently devoted to the whaling issue can be directed to other serious and potentially devastating threats to the planet;
- the rich diversity of views among the Japanese participants;
- the significant benefits of the IWC for whale conservation, as well as the escalating conflict within the IWC's ranks;
- the importance of protection of endangered whale species, and the fact that recovery is progressing for some, but not for others;
- the preference for an internationally-accepted solution, coupled with doubts about whether the political will exists to support such an outcome;
- the perception that, relative to other conventions, the IWC is outdated, less transparent, less flexible and less responsive; and the lack, in the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling, of basic elements of modern conservation agreements, such as the precautionary approach, the ecosystem approach, conflict resolution, and clear criteria or definitions;
- the range of important legal, scientific, ethical, social and cultural issues that must be considered in defining a way forward (ultimately, their resolution is a political, not scientific, matter); and
- the fact that, with neither side prepared to make the necessary concessions, maintenance of the *status quo* seems the best one can hope for. The most promising compromise could involve both (i) recognising the potential claims of established small coastal whaling communities; and (ii) suspending "scientific" whaling in the Southern Ocean and IWC sanctuaries.

SELECTED DOCUMENTS

UNEP GCSS-10

Decisions

1. Chemicals management, including mercury and waste management

The Governing Council,

Recalling its decision 24/3 on chemicals management, in particular section IV on mercury, and its decision 24/5 on waste management,

Further recalling General Assembly resolution 53/242 of 28 July 1999 on the establishment of the Global Ministerial Environment Forum, which provides the Global Ministerial Forum as a high-level environment policy forum in the United Nations system,

Noting that as started in paragraph 6 of resolution 53/242 the primary purpose of special sessions of the Council/Forum is the review of important and emerging policy issues in the field of the environment,

Emphasizing that wherever possible significant programme-related decisions of the Council/Forum are dealt with at its regular sessions,

* See also page 114.

1. *Acknowledges with appreciation* the reports of the Executive Director on chemicals management (UNEP/GCSS.X/4), on progress of the *ad hoc* open-ended working group on mercury (UNEP/GCSS.X/5), and on waste management (UNEP/GCSS.X/7), as requested by the Governing Council in its decisions 24/3 II, 23/3 IV and 24/5, respectively;

2. *Takes note* of the particular significance of the tangible recommendations for developing countries, in particular least developed countries and small island developing States, as well as countries with economies in transition referred to in section I of chapter II of the report of the Executive Director on waste management (UNEP/GCSS.X/7);

3. *Decides* in view of the significant programme-related matters raised in the above-referenced reports to consider them at the Council/Forum's twenty-fifth regular session;

4. *Requests* the Executive Director to continue to implement decisions 24/3 and 24/5 and to present a full report on such implementation at the Council/Forum's twenty-fifth regular session.

2. Sustainable development of the Arctic Region

The Governing Council,

Recalling UNEP Governing Council decision 22/11 (Sustainable development of the Arctic) of 7 February 2003 and in particular in paragraph 2 requesting the Executive Director to provide continuous assessments and early warning on emerging issues related to the Arctic environment, in particular its impact on the global environment,

Recognizing that despite the many successful and continuing efforts of the international community since the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, and some progress having been achieved, continuing efforts by Governments to protect the environment are needed as shown in the United Nations Environment Programme's fourth Global Environment Outlook report, with specific concerns in relation to melting Arctic sea ice,¹

Recalling that "Melting Ice – A Hot Topic?" was the theme for the 2007 World Environment Day and focused on the effects

of climate change on polar ecosystems and communities, ensuing consequences around the world and actions that can be taken to avoid abrupt, accelerating, or potentially irreversible environmental changes,

Extremely concerned over the impact of climate change on the polar regions, especially the Arctic, because of the likely impacts of high rates of projected warming on natural systems and indigenous and other communities as well as biodiversity, with increasingly dramatic effects on the Arctic and potential significant global consequences, e.g., through contributions from glaciers and the Greenland Ice Sheet to sea level rise,

Convinced of the need to protect the Arctic environment and to ensure environmental security for its indigenous and other communities, as well as for its biodiversity,

Well aware of the influence of Arctic sea ice dynamics on the planetary climate system and ocean circulation,

Also well aware of the need for and importance of cooperative measures to promote adaptation of Arctic ecosystems to climate change and for adaptive management of such ecosystems in the face of rapid climate change,

Emphasizing that the International Polar Year 2007–2009, which involves thousands of scientists from over 60 countries working at both poles, provides a foundation for enhancing the scientific basis for informed decision making,

Acknowledging the deep concern over the vulnerability of the environment and ecosystems of the Arctic Ocean and Arctic sea ice and the need for States to strengthen scientific cooperation, as noted in the preambular paragraphs of the United Nations General Assembly omnibus resolution on the Oceans and the Law of the

Arctic States and other interested States and stakeholders to ensure its protection and management with respect to commercial activities including shipping, fishing, oil, gas and mining operations in recently opened ice melt areas of the Arctic marine environment,

Acknowledging the efforts of Arctic States, individually and collectively, to protect the Arctic environment and manage activities in the Arctic to minimize the impact of those activities on the Arctic environment,

1. *Commends* the Arctic Council for its activities related to the Arctic environment and its inhabitants;

2. *Encourages* the United Nations Environment Programme to cooperate, as requested, with the Arctic Council, relevant multilateral environmental agreements and other relevant regional and international bodies, as appropriate;

3. *Urges* Governments of Arctic States and other interested stakeholders to continue to apply the precautionary approach as set forth in Principle 15 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development in connection with their activities potentially affecting the Arctic environment, including its biodiversity, and to continue to conduct environmental impact assessments, as appropriate;

4. *Requests* Governments, together with the International Council for Science and the World Meteorological Organization, the sponsoring agencies of the International Polar Year, and other relevant regional and international bodies including the Arctic Council, the United Nations Environment Programme and multilateral environmental agreements, to enhance the scientific basis for informed decision making through the promotion of international scientific collaboration and coordination to better under-

implementation of appropriate measures to facilitate adaptation to climate change at all levels, including by indigenous and other communities as part of ongoing cooperation in the region.

3. Medium-term Strategy for the period 2010–2013

The Governing Council,

Recalling paragraph 13 of its decision 24/9, by which it requested the Executive Director to prepare, in consultation with the Committee of Permanent Representatives, a medium-term strategy for 2010–2013 with a clearly defined vision, objectives, priorities, impact measures and a robust mechanism for review by Governments, for approval by the Governing Council at its twenty-fifth session,

Noting with appreciation the open, transparent and extensive consultation process undertaken by the Executive Director with the Committee of Permanent Representatives in developing the United Nations Environment Programme Medium-term Strategy 2010–2013;

Also noting with appreciation the consultation with the multilateral environment agreement secretariats administered by the United Nations Environment Programme and with civil society and the private sector in developing the Medium-term Strategy 2010–2013,

Further noting with appreciation that the Medium-term Strategy 2010–2013 developed by the Executive Director is well focused, results-based and elaborates six cross-cutting thematic priority areas of work and various means of implementation as a way of strengthening the work of the United Nations Environment Programme in the period 2010–2013,

Emphasizing the need to implement fully decision SS.VII/1 on international environmental governance adopted by the Governing Council at its seventh special session (“the Cartagena Package”), and welcoming the Medium-term Strategy’s particular emphasis on significantly enhancing the capacity of the United Nations Environment Programme to deliver on the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building;² on the role of the United Nations Environment Programme as the principal United Nations body in the field of environment; on ensuring that United Nations Environment Programme actions are founded on sound science; and on fully implementing results-based management,

Noting also the time set by the United Nations Secretariat in the instructions issued for the preparation of the strategic framework 2010–2011 by each fund, programme and department of the United Nations secretariat,³

Acknowledging that in order for the Medium-term Strategy developed by the Executive Director to be linked in a meaningful fashion with the Strategic Framework and subsequent Programme of Work for 2010–2011 it is essential that the Governing Council should first consider the Medium-term Strategy at its Tenth Special Session,

Noting that the Executive Director will consider the views expressed at the tenth special session of the Governing Council on the Medium-term Strategy 2010–2013 when formulating the Programme of Work



Grimaldi Forum

Courtesy: IISD

Sea adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2007.

Noting that the United Nations Environment Programme participates in Arctic Council meetings as an observer,

Emphasizing that the exploitation of Arctic resources should be done in a sustainable manner,

Believing that the Arctic environment, its indigenous and other communities and biodiversity benefit from the efforts of Arc-

stand, and predict Arctic change as a key International Polar Year legacy activity;

5. *Encourages* the United Nations Environment Programme to join with other relevant organizations and programmes to seek means to sustain and enhance Arctic observing networks beyond the International Polar Year research phase;

6. *Also requests* Governments of Arctic States and other interested stakeholders to individually and collectively expedite the

and Budget for 2010–11 and for 2012–2013, and fully integrate any existing policies approved by the Governing Council into the Programmes of Work,

1. *Welcomes* the United Nations Environment Programme Medium-term Strategy 2010–2013 and *authorizes* the Executive Director to use the Medium-term Strategy 2010–2013 in formulating the Strategic Frameworks and Programme of Work and Budget for 2010–2011 and for 2012–2013, and as a means to encourage coordination among United Nations Environment Programme divisions, without prejudicing the outcome of the governmental negotiations on the Programmes of Work and Budgets;

2. *Notes* that any budgetary issues arising from the United Nations Environment Programme Medium-term Strategy 2010–2013 will be addressed through the Programme of Work and Budget for 2010–2011 and for 2012–2013, that will be approved by the Governing Council at its respective sessions based on priorities expressed and agreed by member States;

3. *Encourages* the Executive Director to continue to strengthen results-based management in the United Nations Environment Programme and, working within the approved Programme of Work 2008–2009, to use the period 2008–2009 to commence the implementation of the transition to becoming a fully results-based organization;

4. *Requests* the Executive Director to inform Governments about the implementation of the United Nations Environment Programme Medium-term Strategy 2010–2013 at regular intervals and to submit to the Governing Council, at its twenty-sixth regular session in 2011, a progress report on the implementation of the Strategy.

4. International Decade for addressing Climate Change

The Governing Council,

Remaining deeply concerned that all countries, in particular developing countries, including the least developed countries and Small Island Developing States as well as countries with economies in transition, face increased risks from the negative effects of climate change, and stressing the need to address adaptation needs relating to such effects,

Recalling the provisions of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, including the acknowledgement that the global nature of climate change calls for the widest possible cooperation by all countries and their participation in an effective and appropriate international response, in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities and their social and economic conditions,

Noting the significance of the scientific findings of the fourth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which contribute positively to the discussions under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the understanding of the phenomenon of climate change, including its impacts and risks,

Determined to maintain the spirit of international solidarity and commitment generated by the outcomes of the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention

on Climate Change, and the third session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, held in Bali, Indonesia, from 3 to 15 December 2007, as well as the Bali Action Plan (also known informally as the “Bali Roadmap”),

Reaffirming its commitment to support efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change, which are interlinked with efforts to reduce significantly the loss of biodiversity, promote desertification control, eradicate extreme poverty and famine, promote sustainable development and improve the lives of affected or vulnerable populations,

Invites the United Nations Economic and Social Council to consider a proposal for the proclamation of an International Decade for addressing Climate Change for the period 2010–2020, bearing in mind General Assembly resolution 61/185 of 20 December 2006 on the proclamation of international years, to inform the United Nations General Assembly prior to its sixty-third session.

5. Global Environment Outlook: environment for development

The Governing Council,

Pursuing its functions and responsibilities as outlined in General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972, including to keep under review the world environmental situation in order to ensure that emerging environmental problems of wide international significance are prioritized and receive appropriate and adequate consideration by Governments and to promote the contribution of relevant international scientific and other professional communities to the acquisition, assessment and exchange of environmental knowledge and information,

Recalling its decisions 22/1 on early warning, assessment and monitoring, 23/6 on keeping the world environmental situation under review and 24/2 on the world environmental situation,

Welcoming the preparation and publication of the fourth Global Environment Outlook report by the Executive Director, including the intergovernmentally and stakeholder-endorsed Summary for Decision Makers,

Welcoming with appreciation the in-kind contributions to the fourth Global Environment Outlook report of experts, Governments, United Nations bodies, collaborating centres, the private sector and civil society, as well as the statement adopted by the participants at the Second Global Intergovernmental and Multi Stakeholder Consultation on the Fourth Global Environment Outlook Report, held in September 2007, in which they endorsed the summary for decision makers of the report,

1. *Expresses* its continued deep concern over the evidence in the assessment report of unprecedented environmental changes at all levels, including the natural and social time lags involved in addressing those changes and the risk that biophysical and social systems can reach tipping points beyond which there may be abrupt, accelerating and possibly irreversible changes and potentially negative implications for human well-being and economic and social develop-

ment, especially for the poor and vulnerable groups in society,

2. *Acknowledges* that current environmental degradation represents a serious challenge for human well-being and sustainable development, and in some cases peace and security, and that for many problems the benefits of early action outweigh the costs and represent opportunities for the private sector, consumers and local communities for strengthened cooperation at the national and international levels to achieve sustainable development;

3. *Welcomes* the progress that has been made on several fronts to address the challenges outlined in the report, and encourages greater sharing of lessons learned and best practices and their broader application;

4. *Stresses* that the transition toward sustainable development may involve hard choices among different concerns and interests in society which need to be supported by well-governed, effectively managed, innovative and results-oriented institutions able to create appropriate conditions for change and that the United Nations Environment Programme should promote such efforts and lead by example;

5. *Encourages* Governments, the United Nations Environment Programme and other United Nations bodies, international organizations, the private sector, civil society and the public at large to work at the global, regional, national and local levels to achieve sustainable development and to take timely action to prevent, mitigate and adapt to unprecedented environmental change;

6. *Requests* the Executive Director to encourage and support where possible the efforts of national bodies to conduct national assessments of environmental change and its implications for development, within the framework of the Bali Strategic Plan;

7. *Also requests* the Executive Director, in building on the experiences gained from the preparation of the fourth Global Environment Outlook report and other environmental assessments as well as other recent developments aimed at strengthening the scientific base of the United Nations Environment Programme, to present to the Governing Council at its next session, in consultation with the Committee of Permanent Representatives:

(a) An overview of the international environmental assessment landscape, identifying possible gaps and duplications, in close cooperation with multilateral environmental agreements and other United Nations entities;

(b) Options for the possible development of a scientifically credible and policy-relevant global assessment of environmental change and its implications for development, including a cost analysis and an indicative benefit analysis for each option.

Notes

1 GEO4, Summary for Decision Makers, Polar, p. 19.

2 Adopted by the UNEP Governing Council in decision 23/1 I.

3 Proposed Strategic Framework for the biennium 2010–2011, Instructions, issued by the United Nations Environment Programme Planning and Budget Division on 11 October 2007. The Instructions will be made available at <http://ppbd.un.org>.