

**APPENDIX IV****OVERVIEW OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL DECISIONS ON  
INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE**

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Upon the recommendation of the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment, the UN General Assembly, in its resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 1972, established UNEP as the central UN node for global environmental cooperation and treaty making. The resolution also established the UNEP Governing Council (GC) to provide a forum for the international community to address major and emerging environmental policy issues. The GC's responsibilities include the promotion of international environmental cooperation and the recommendation of policies to achieve this, and the provision of policy guidance for the direction and coordination of environmental programmes in the UN system. The GC reports to the UN General Assembly, which also elects the GC's 58 members for four-year terms, taking into account the principle of equitable regional representation. The Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GMEF) is constituted by the GC, as envisaged in UN General Assembly resolution 53/242. The purpose of the GMEF is to institute, at a high political level, a process for reviewing important and emerging policy issues in the field of the environment.

The 19th session of the GC convened in two segments from 27 January-7 February 1997, and from 3-4 April 1997, in Nairobi, Kenya. Delegates adopted the *Nairobi Declaration* on the Role and Mandate of UNEP, which expanded the mandate to include: analyzing the state of the global environment; assessing global and regional environmental trends; providing policy advice and early warning information on environmental threats; and catalyzing and promoting international cooperation and action, based on the best scientific and technical capabilities available.

The 20th session of the GC/GMEF took place from 1-5 February 1999, in Nairobi, and adopted over 30 decisions on a range of topics, including: the Environment Fund, administrative and budgetary matters; linkages among and support to environmental and environment-related conventions; and policy issues, including the state of the environment, coordination and cooperation within and outside the UN, UNEP governance and emerging policy issues.

The 6th Special Session of the GC/GMEF took place from 29-31 May 2000, in Malmö, Sweden. Ministers adopted the *Malmö Ministerial Declaration*, which agreed

that the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) should review the requirements for a greatly strengthened institutional structure for international environmental governance (IEG).

The 21<sup>st</sup> session of the CG/GMEF took place from 5-9 February 2001, in Nairobi. Delegates established the Open-ended Intergovernmental Group of Ministers or Their Representatives (IGM) to undertake a comprehensive policy-oriented assessment of existing institutional weaknesses, as well as future needs and options for strengthening IEG.

The 7<sup>th</sup> Special Session of the GC/GMEF was held from 13-15 February 2002, in Cartagena, Colombia. In its decision SS.VII/1 (see Appendix IV in this volume), GC/GMEF adopted the IGM report, which contains recommendations aimed at strengthening IEG, including through: improved coherence in international environmental policy-making; strengthening the role and financial situation of UNEP; improved coordination among and effectiveness of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs); and capacity building, technology transfer and country-level coordination.

The World Summit on Sustainable Development was held from 26 August-4 September 2002, in Johannesburg, South Africa. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) sets out a framework of action to implement the commitments originally agreed at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. The JPOI, among other things, emphasizes that the international community should fully implement the outcomes of decision SS.VII/1 on IEG.

The 22<sup>nd</sup> session of CG/GMEF took place from 3-7 February 2003, in Nairobi. Delegates adopted more than 40 decisions on issues relating to IEG, post-conflict environmental assessment, UNEP's water policy and strategy, SAICM, a mercury programme, support to Africa, production and consumption patterns, and the environment and cultural diversity.

The 8<sup>th</sup> Special Session of the GC/GMEF took place from 29-31 March 2004, in Jeju, Republic of Korea. At the conclusion of the ministerial consultations, delegates adopted the "Jeju Initiative," containing the Chair's summary of the discussions and decisions on: SIDS; waste management; regional annexes; and the implementation of decision SS.VII/1 on IEG.

The 23<sup>rd</sup> session of the GC/GMEF took place from 21-25 February 2005, in Nairobi. Ministers considered the implementation of internationally agreed development goals, and adopted decisions on, among other things: the *Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building* (See Appendix VI in this volume) and IEG among other issues.

The 2005 World Summit was held at UN headquarters in New York from 14-16 September. Delegates recognized the need for more efficient environmental activities in the UN system, through, *inter alia*, enhanced coordination, improved policy advice and guidance, and strengthened scientific knowledge. They further agreed to explore the possibility of a more coherent institutional framework, including a more integrated structure, building on existing institutions and internationally agreed instruments, as well as treaty bodies and UN specialized agencies.

The 9<sup>th</sup> Special Session of the GC/GMEF was held from 7-9 February 2006, in Dubai. The plenary discussion on environmental governance, outcome of the 2005 World Summit, and GC universal membership did not produce an agreed outcome and delegates decided that the report of the meeting should reflect the divergent views expressed.

The 24<sup>th</sup> session of the GC/GMEF took place in Nairobi, 5-9 February 2007. The long-standing, thorny issue of IEG was debated once again. What was confirmed by the meeting is that the need to strengthen UNEP is imperative. The problem lies in how to achieve this, by bolstering the existing structure, or by transforming it into a new institution altogether. Some regretted another missed opportunity at this Governing Council to issue a clear message on environmental reform. One of the Co-Chairs of the UN General Assembly Informal Consultations on the Institutional Framework for UN Environmental Activities was reportedly disappointed to leave Nairobi without a more conclusive message from the environment ministers. Many were upbeat, however, saying that the mere presence, in the ministerial consultations, of the Co-Chairs of these Informal Consultations, added momentum to the debate. Others felt that entrenched positions are and will continue to drag out the IEG debates. Whether the recent Paris Conference, which issued yet another call for transforming UNEP into a UNEO, has contributed or detracted from this momentum is yet to be seen. Five years have passed since UNEP launched the Cartagena process, and issues such as universal membership have shown little progress beyond recognizing the fact that it is a controversial issue with no consensus in sight. Some delegates suggested that divisive issues such as these deflect UNEP from the generally agreed need to strengthen implementation. They pointed out that it is on issues of substance that UNEP can project its strength and make a difference.