

14/20. Global climate change

The Governing Council,

Aware that national and international studies continue to conclude that a global climate change will result from increases in the concentration of greenhouse gases from human activities,

Concerned that such change would have potentially serious consequences for human welfare and the natural environment,

Mindful of the need to improve expeditiously scientific understanding of climate change, its causes and its consequences, as basis for formulating appropriate policy responses at the global, regional and national level,

Recognizing the importance of initiating international consideration of possible policy responses,

Recognizing that the United Nations Environment Programme, by effective implementation of its lead responsibility within the World Climate Programme for climate impact studies, as well as through the Global Environmental Monitoring System and its Global Resource Information Data Base, can make important contributions in this area,

Considering that the recently concluded Tenth Congress of the World Meteorological Organization has stressed the importance of close co-operation with the United Nations Environment Programme and the International Council of Scientific Unions on global climate change, in particular to improve scientific assessments, including impact assessments,

1. Notes with satisfaction the importance being attached by the United Nations Environment Programme to the global climate change problem including efforts to raise public awareness and to assess climate impacts;

2. Urges the Executive Director to ensure that the United Nations Environment Programme, working in close co-operation with the World Meteorological Organization and the International Council of Scientific Unions, in particular, the Special Committee on Global Change of the International Council of Scientific Unions, maintains an active, influential role within the World Climate Programme through the fulfilment of its central responsibility for climate impact studies and by ensuring that the World Climate Research Programme includes studies on the causes and effects of atmospheric changes, taking account of social and economic aspects;

3. Welcomes the Executive Director's plans to join with the World Meteorological Organization and the International Council of Scientific Unions in convening a second World Climate Conference in late 1989 or early 1990 and to support the World Conference on the Changing Atmosphere: Implications for Global Security, being convened by the Government of Canada in June 1988;

4. Urges the Executive Director to respond positively to the decision by the Tenth Congress of the World Meteorological Organization requesting its Secretary-General, in co-operation with the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to explore and, after appropriate consultation with Governments, to establish an ad hoc intergovernmental mechanism to carry out internationally co-ordinated scientific assessments of the magnitude, timing, and potential impact of climate change;

5. Requests the Executive Director to report to the next regular session of the Governing Council on:

(a) Progress with climate impact studies;

(b) The work of the ad hoc intergovernmental mechanism;

(c) The full range of possible responses by Governments and international agencies to anticipated climate changes, including possibilities for reducing the rate of climate change, taking into account inter alia, the findings of the World Meteorological Organization/International Council of Scientific Unions/United Nations Environment Programme Advisory Group on Greenhouse Gases and those of other relevant agencies.