

# stockholm: results

The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment accepted by acclamation – although with some reservations – a declaration on the Human Environment, and recommended for approval by the General Assembly of the United Nations an action plan and the establishment of a 54-member Governing Council for Environmental Programmes, which would report annually to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council. It further recommended that a small secretariat be established, to be headed by an Executive Director to be elected by the General Assembly on the nomination of the Secretary-General.

The Conference also recommended the establishment of a voluntary fund to finance wholly or partly the costs of new "environmental initiatives" undertaken within the United Nations system, and for other programmes of general interest. Inter alia, the Governing Council is "to provide general policy guidelines for the direction and co-ordination of environmental programmes within the United Nations System". The Executive Director would be entrusted with the responsibilities for administration of the Environment Fund and for assessing the effectiveness of environmental programmes within the UN System; and would be required to advise, as appropriate and under the guidance of the Governing Council, intergovernmental bodies within the UN System on the formulation and implementation of environmental programmes.

Further, the Conference recommended the establishment of an Environmental Co-ordinating Board, chaired by the Executive Director, under the auspices and within the framework of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (the ACC), which would report annually to the Governing Council. Organizations within the UN System were invited "to adopt the measures that may be required to undertake concerted and co-ordinated programmes with regard to international environmental problems, taking into account existing procedures for prior consultation, particularly on programme and budgetary matters".

The Conference also recommended that the General Assembly convene later a second UN Conference on the Human Environment.

Among the action proposals were several which referred to activities of interest to the Agency. Observers at the Conference felt that, in general, the documents considered in Stockholm call for an integrated approach to the assessment of the environmental impacts of man's activities, rather than assessments made considering each activity only sector by sector. Inter alia, the Conference recognised the rôle of the Joint FAO/IAEA Division of Atomic Energy in Food and Agriculture in planned programmes for pest control and for the reduction of the harmful effects which may result from the use of chemicals in agriculture.



Of specific interest to the IAEA is a recommendation that the Secretary-General of the UN take steps to:

"-ensure that a comprehensive study be promptly undertaken with the aim of submitting a first report at the latest in 1975 on available energy sources, new technology, and consumption trends in order to assist in providing a basis for the most effective developments of the world's energy resources with due regard to the environmental effects of energy production and use; such study to be carried out in collaboration with appropriate international bodies such as IAEA and OECD."

Other sub-paragraphs of this recommendation call for the collection, measurement and analysis of data relating to the environmental effects of various alternative systems of energy use and production, and for the exchange of such information. The objective of these activities is to learn more about the relationships between the quantities of effluents resulting from energy production and use, and effects on weather, human health, plant and animal life, and "amenity values". Radioactive substances are among the effluents to be considered.

In his address to the Plenary Session of the Conference the Director General of the IAEA, Dr. Eklund, told delegates of the Board's decision earlier this year that one of the Agency's most important and urgent tasks was the elaboration of recommended standards of safety concerning the dispersion into the environment of radioactive waste resulting from the peaceful uses of atomic energy. The Conference recommended that "without reducing in any way their attention to non-radioactive pollutants, Governments -

"- explore with the International Atomic Energy Agency and the World Health Organization the feasibility of developing a registry of releases to the biosphere of significant quantities of radioactive materials;

" - support and expand, under the IAEA and appropriate international organizations, international co-operation on radioactive waste problems, including problems of mining and tailings and also including co-ordination of plans for the siting of fuel reprocessing plants in relation to the siting of the ultimate storage areas, considering also the transportation problems".

One recommendation addressed to the Secretary-General of the UN asks him to ensure that "research activities in terrestrial ecology be encouraged, supported and co-ordinated through the appropriate agencies, so as to provide adequate knowledge of the inputs, movements, residence times and ecological effects of pollutants identified as critical." Action has already been taken to strengthen the work of the IAEA in this subject area with respect to radioactive materials.

With respect to marine pollutants, the Conference recommended that the Secretary-General, together with sponsoring agencies, make it possible for the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Pollution (GESAMP), on which the Agency is represented, to

" - re-examine annually, and revise as required, its Review of Harmful Chemical Substances with a view to elaborating further its assessment of sources, pathways and resulting risks of marine pollutants;

" - assemble, having regard to other work in progress, scientific data and provide advice on scientific aspects of marine pollution, especially those of an interdisciplinary nature."

GESAMP has already made such a review, and is of the opinion that radioactive materials are not on the priority list of harmful substances in the oceans. It will be recalled that the Agency's activities with respect to marine pollutants are centred on the Division of Nuclear Safety and Environmental Protection and on the Laboratory of Marine Radioactivity, Monaco; each of these divisions of the Agency is dealing with health and safety considerations in the contamination of the seas and oceans with radioactive materials, and is also considering technical measures to be taken in the event of accidental contamination of the sea with radioactive materials.

