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UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

Note by the Secretary-General

1. In accordance with operative paragraph 4 of General Assembly Resolution 2657 (XXV) of 7 December 1970, the report of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment on its second session (Geneva, 8-19 February, 1971, A/Conf.48/PC/9) has been transmitted to the Council on 5 May 1971 (E/4991) for such comments, suggestions and recommendations as the Council may wish to make.

Proposed Conference Agenda

2. The second session of the Preparatory Committee agreed upon a proposed Conference agenda and a list of annotations to the main substantive items of the agenda (A/CONF.48/PC/9, para. 20). The six main substantive items, in addition to the proposed Declaration on the Human Environment, are:

The planning and management of human settlements for environmental quality

The environmental aspects of natural resource management

Identification and control of pollutants and nuisances of broad international significance

Educational, informational, social and cultural aspects of environmental issues

Development and environment

The international organizational implications of action proposals.

Intergovernmental Working Groups (IWGs)

3. The Preparatory Committee recommended the establishment of an IWG to prepare the Declaration on the Human Environment. The Group has since met twice in New York,

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first for a brief organizational meeting and later for a substantive meeting (10-21 May 1971).[1/]

4. The Preparatory Committee also identified a number of additional topics as being suitable for "Level III" action, i.e., action which could be initiated before the Stockholm Conference. In the case of some of these topics, the Preparatory Committee recommended the establishment of IWGs to formulate proposals for specific action. The four additional subjects for which IWGs have been set up are the following (place and date of scheduled meetings in brackets):

Marine Pollution (London, 14-18 June 1971)

Soils (Rome, 21-25 June 1971)

Monitoring or Surveillance (Geneva, 16-20 August 1971)

Conservation (New York, September 1971).[2/]

5. In the case of other topics, including training, information exchange and genetic pools, the Preparatory Committee suggested that the Secretariat should provide information to it at its third session to enable it to recommend whether additional IWGs should be set up to consider these topics.

6. The IWG on the Declaration is composed of all the members of the Preparatory Committee; other States members of the United Nations may also participate in its work as observers. Membership in the other IWGs is open to all interested United Nations member States; in addition the appropriate components of the United Nations system and certain specialized non-governmental organizations may participate. Thirty-four Member States were represented at the IWG on Marine Pollution and twenty-seven Member States at the IWG on Soils.

1/ The report of the IWG has been circulated as document (A/CONF.48/PC.12)

2/ During the third session of the Preparatory Committee.

Regional Seminars on Development and Environment

7. In order to promote the effective participation of developing countries in the preparatory work for the Conference and in the Conference itself, a series of regional seminars on "Development and Environment" is being organized by the United Nations regional economic commissions and UNESOB in co-operation with the secretariat of the Conference. The programme of seminars is as follows:-

ECAFE, Bangkok	17-23 August 1971
ECA, Addis Ababa	23-28 August 1971
ECLA, Mexico City	6-11 September 1971
UNESOB, Beirut	27 September - 2 October 1971

8. In order to undertake an overall examination of the issues involved and to provide a report for discussion at these seminars, a panel of experts on "Development and Environment" was convened in Geneva from 4 to 12 June 1971.

Financial Contributions

9. The governments of some industrialized countries have contributed generously to the cost of the programme of preparatory work for the Conference. Finance has been provided for the regional seminars and the panel of experts on development and environment, for experts to assist governments of developing countries in preparing their National Reports, for the participation of government representatives from developing countries in the IWGs on Marine Pollution and on Soils, and for part of the costs of the IWG on Marine Pollution. In addition, IMCO has provided facilities for the meeting of the IWG on Marine Pollution, and FAO for that on Soils, while WMO will provide facilities for the IWG on Monitoring.

Preparations for the third session of the Preparatory Committee

10. The third session of the Preparatory Committee will take place in New York from 13 to 24 September 1971. The Secretary-General of the Conference will submit a report to the Preparatory Committee,[3/] which will include a tentative annotated list of action proposals and an outline of an action plan under each main substantive item of the proposed agenda. The report will also describe progress on other aspects of the preparations for the Conference and an account of the work of the IWG and of the regional seminars on "Development and Environment".

3/ To be circulated under the symbol A/CONF.48/PC/11.