

IPU Document No 22 (114th IPU Assembly)

*circulated in the 61st session of the General Assembly, in accordance with resolution A/57/47, under
agenda item 52 of the preliminary list*



INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

Resolution adopted by consensus* by the 114th Assembly

(Nairobi, 12 May 2006)

THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTS IN ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT
AND IN COMBATING GLOBAL DEGRADATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

The 114th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Alarmed at the state of the world's ecosystems and *recalling* the following agreements
and instruments:

- The Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm, 1972);
- The Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (1979);
- The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (1982);

* The delegation of India expressed strong reservations to the text of the resolution as a whole.

- The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and Agenda 21, adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (1992);
- The United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (1992) and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (2000);
- The Convention to Combat Desertification (1994);
- The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC, 1992) and its Kyoto Protocol (1997);
- The Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and the Plan of Implementation adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) (2002);
- The 2005 World Summit Outcome,

Further recalling the following reports and events:

- Reports to the Club of Rome, *Limits to Growth* (1972) and *No Limits to Learning* (1979);
- The World Commission on Environment and Development report *Our Common Future* (1987);
- The United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (2000);
- The United Nations Global Compact (2000);
- The Third Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2001);
- The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2001);
- The Monterrey Consensus adopted by the International Conference on Financing for Development (2002);
- The Report of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) entitled *Natural Selection: Evolving Choices for Renewable Energy Technology and Policy* (2003);

- The Parliamentary Declaration entitled *Toward Sustainability: Implementing Agenda 21*, adopted by consensus at the Parliamentary Meeting held on the occasion of the 2002 WSSD;
- The final report of the United Nations Millennium Project, *Investing in Development* (2005);
- The support for the Earth Charter expressed at the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2003);
- The IUCN World Conservation Congress resolution endorsing the Earth Charter (2004);
- The Ministerial Conference on the 3R initiative (2005);
- The eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 11) and the first meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (COP/MOP 1) (2005);
- The Mauritius Strategy and Declaration drawn up at the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (2005);
- The Hyogo Declaration and the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters (2005);
- The Parliamentary Declaration of the Fourth World Water Forum (Mexico, 2005);
- The Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Development and Climate (2005);
- The Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) adopted by the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM) (2006),

Deeply concerned that, while there has been some action relating to these commitments, many of them remain unfulfilled, and *emphasizing* the support expressed by the Inter-Parliamentary Union for measures aimed at curbing global environmental degradation, especially in the following statements, declarations, and resolutions:

- The statement adopted by the 87th Inter-Parliamentary Conference and entitled *Environment and Development: The views of parliamentarians on the main directions of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and its prospects* (Yaoundé, 1992);
- The Declaration adopted by the 97th Inter-Parliamentary Conference and entitled *Measures required to change consumption and production patterns with a view to sustainable development* (Seoul, 1997);
- The resolution adopted by the 107th Inter-Parliamentary Conference and entitled *Ten years after Rio: Global degradation of the environment and parliamentary support for the Kyoto Protocol* (Marrakech, 2002);
- The resolution adopted by the 108th Inter-Parliamentary Conference and entitled *International cooperation for the prevention and management of transborder natural disasters and their impact on the regions concerned* (Santiago de Chile, 2003);
- The resolution adopted by the 111th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and entitled *The role of parliaments in preserving biodiversity* (Geneva, 2004), supporting the commitment of the 2002 WSSD to achieve a significant reduction in the current rate of loss of biological diversity by 2010,

Recognizing that global environmental problems pose a common threat to all humanity, particularly to developing countries, and constitute a common but differentiated responsibility for all countries,

Considering the high level of exhaust substances in the ozone layer, and *concerned* about the growing environmental impact of climate change,

Acknowledging the need for cooperation among all stakeholders, including government, civil society and business,

Recognizing that it has become urgent to reconcile sustainable development with globalization, the latter being the cause of a vicious cycle of environmental degradation triggered by unsustainable production and consumption patterns in both developed and developing nations, among other factors,

Also recognizing the importance, in establishing a sustainable society, of the role of education and learning, which have an impact on the awareness, lifestyle and work ethic of individuals,

Emphasizing that preservation of the environment is essential to poverty eradication and the achievement of the MDGs,

Noting the launch in 2005 of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNDESD), involving all actors and all levels of national education systems, UNESCO's International Implementation Scheme for the UNDESD, and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe's Regional Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development and the Vilnius framework for its implementation,

Also noting that the International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Monterrey, Mexico, reaffirmed that the target for the provision of official development assistance (ODA) was 0.7 per cent of developed countries' gross national product (GNP), *recognizing* the need to study new approaches to innovative financial mechanisms, and *calling on* governments of developing countries to take urgent action for ensuring sustainable development,

Believing that effective administrative bodies and enabling legal and regulatory frameworks constitute the cornerstones of good governance and thereby enable governments to address critical environmental protection concerns,

Emphasizing the importance of the gender perspective in efforts to tackle national disasters, degradation of the natural environment, environmental pollution, deforestation, global warming and other environmental problems,

Recognizing the need to establish a sound material-cycle society with the 3R (Reduce, Reuse and Recycle) initiative,

Concerned about the contamination of global water resources and the deterioration of the quality of drinking water for human consumption, and about water consumption increases worldwide, which together result in water shortages in some regions of the world, worsening desertification and deforestation,

Emphasizing that environmentalism should become a way of life that governs the behaviour and activities of all,

Acknowledging the significance of the precautionary approach advocated in Principle 15 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the objective of the UNFCCC climate stabilization clauses, and the fact that scientific uncertainty concerning the causes of global warming can no longer be an excuse for not taking any action,

Noting the UNEP publication *Natural Selection: Evolving Choices for Renewable Energy Technology and Policy*, and *anticipating* the potential of a cleaner economy in the future,

Recalling the essential role played by parliaments in strengthening efforts to encourage sustainable development through legislative and budgetary policies that are consistent with the objectives set forth in the international conventions, through appropriate initiatives to monitor government action, and through advocacy aimed at public opinion and society at large,

1. *Calls upon* governments to ensure prompt implementation of all international environmental conventions to which they are party;
2. *Proposes* that international environmental governance and UNEP's role as a provider of policy advice and guidance be further strengthened, that the participation of all relevant actors, including NGOs, in international environmental policy-making be ensured, and that multilevel environmental partnerships fostered;
3. *Calls upon* all environmental management decision-making bodies to take into account the experiences, perspectives and knowledge of women, and to ensure their equal participation in the planning, formulation, implementation and evaluation of environmental policies in order to mainstream the gender component in all environmental programmes;
4. *Recalls* that the European Union advocates the transformation of UNEP into a full-fledged United Nations environmental organization;
5. *Calls upon* parliaments, as front-line actors in the system of global environmental governance, to participate actively – through their own delegations – in all international events at which the major options for protecting the environment and for using natural resources sustainably are debated and negotiated;
6. *Calls upon* governments, when deciding policies, to take into account the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and its main message that human well-being and progress towards sustainable development hinge on improving the management of Earth's ecosystems with a view to ensuring their conservation and sustainable use;

7. *Proposes* that UNEP prepare a list of global environmental goals similar to the MDGs, supplement these goals with criteria and indicators for their implementation and promote their implementation as a significant contribution to sustainable development;
8. *Encourages* parliamentarians to press their governments to give high priority to their international sustainable development commitments, including the MDGs;
9. *Stresses* the need for ensuring the protection of biodiversity, including on the high seas outside the jurisdiction of coastal States;
10. *Calls upon* countries that have not acceded to the Kyoto Protocol, starting with those that pollute the most, to do so in order to give effect to measures for the prevention of global warming;
11. *Calls for*, in the framework of the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol, strengthened commitments from all countries under Annex 1 as soon as possible;
12. *Calls upon* all countries designing a post-Kyoto framework to shoulder greenhouse gas emission reduction/control responsibilities, in accordance with the principles of the UNFCCC, while *also calling upon* developed countries to provide further support to developing nations;
13. *Calls upon* parliaments to secure national backing for the objective recommended by the international scientific community with regard to global warming, namely to limit to 2°C the rise in mean global temperatures compared with pre-industrial levels, and to take action towards attaining that objective, bearing in mind that a decrease in greenhouse gas emissions by a factor of two globally and by a factor of four for the industrialized countries is generally considered necessary for achieving that goal;

14. *Strongly urges* governments and parliaments to reverse the negative environmental developments in the Arctic region, particularly regarding the effects of climate change, and *warns against* the effects of the accumulation of persistent pollutants in regions which are particularly vulnerable to climate change;
15. *Calls upon* governments and public financial institutions to promote research, development and deployment of low-impact renewable energies, and to encourage the transfer to developing countries of technologies that are appropriate for the geographical and natural conditions of each region;
16. *Recalls* such international efforts as the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership (REEEP) and the role played by the International Energy Agency (IEA), as positive steps in the direction of improving energy efficiency and cooperation;
17. *Encourages* governments and parliaments to advocate environmental awareness and educate the public about coordinated action against environmental degradation;
18. *Supports and promotes* the development of a ten-year framework of programmes in support of regional and national initiatives to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production, and in this connection *calls for* the promotion of sustainable public procurement;

19. *Calls upon* parliaments fully to commit themselves to the challenges of climate change and its effects on the global environment and to take the necessary legislative action to mitigate the effects of the problem;
20. *Calls upon* governments and parliaments, with due regard for national circumstances, clearly to define corporate social responsibility in their domestic legislation, and to uphold the philosophy of the Ministerial Conference on the 3R initiative, in order to promote the development of a sound material-cycle society;
21. *Calls upon* parliaments to promote, within the context of the ratification of international conventions and treaties, the adoption of national plans on major environmental issues and sustainable development in which goals, including quantitative goals, are set;
22. *Calls upon* parliaments to promote legislation that stimulates the development of environmentally-friendly products, and to promote the use of green bonds and Clean Development Mechanisms;
23. *Encourages* governments and parliaments to ensure accession to and implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (1994), and *supports* the International Year of Deserts and Desertification (2006);
24. *Calls for* early ratification of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediment (2004);
25. *Encourages* parliamentarians in all States to advance efforts towards education for sustainable development and to serve as role models for the global citizens who will

be the foundation of a sustainable future, and *calls for* programmes specifically targeting women in order to strengthen their role as key managers of natural resources;

26. *Calls upon* parliaments to recognize that preservation and conservation of the hydrological cycle are key to maintaining the climatic and environmental cycles that serve to regenerate the water supplies needed to ensure social development and quality of life for the world's peoples, particularly in terms of health and food production, and to prevent desertification and deforestation;
27. *Calls upon* governments, in cooperation with international bodies dealing with environmental issues, businesses and civil society organizations, to put in place UNDESD implementation schemes that include systems for periodic monitoring and assessment;
28. *Encourages* environmental bodies to develop sex-disaggregated indicators and data and to undertake systematic gender impact analysis assessments and research in order to evaluate the impact of environmental policies on both sexes;
29. *Calls upon* parliaments to promote greater technical and financial cooperation on renewable energies by encouraging transfers of technology and human, technical and institutional capacity-building between developed and less developed nations;
30. *Calls upon* governments and parliaments, in view of the climate stabilization clauses of the UNFCCC, to take action to greatly reduce greenhouse gas emissions, share best practices, and carry out applied studies and research, including using the back-casting approach;

31. *Calls upon* parliaments and governments to ensure that women have access to land ownership and are allowed to manage natural resources, as balanced ownership patterns are a principal requirement for avoiding environmental degradation;
32. *Urges* all countries to formulate a comprehensive environmental policy that can genuinely enhance and sustain economic growth without destructive consequences for our shared resources;
33. *Calls upon* governments and parliaments, in the light of the last WSSD, to pursue and support more efficient and coherent implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, to achieve a significant reduction in the current rate of loss of biological diversity by 2010, which will require action at all levels, including the preparation and implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans;
34. *Acknowledges* the controversies which surround the nuclear option for energy production, together with the problems posed by decommissioning, storage of nuclear waste and accidental leakage, and, at the same time, *recognizes* the need to keep the option open and for increased research to overcome these problems;
35. *Encourages* parliaments to draw up the necessary legislation, to review a menu of policy options, including ecological tax reform, and to propose such policies to governments;
36. *Calls upon* parliaments and governments to ensure adequate funding for UNEP and sufficient financial backing for the implementation of environmental management legislation, and *encourages* the development of green budgeting based on the model of gender budgeting;

37. *Urges* parliamentarians, and more specifically women parliamentarians, to establish lobbying networks within parliaments to bring about changes in the management of natural resources;
38. *Also encourages* governments to include in their budgets clear indications of the financial and non-financial costs related to environmental degradation, and the benefits of ecosystem services;
39. *Encourages* all transnational companies to adopt and implement high environmental standards as part of their corporate social responsibility, in line with the cooperation provided for in the Global Compact;
40. *Encourages* parliaments and governments to give citizens access to information on the local environmental situation;
41. *Invites* parliaments to promote the development of new and broader tools and methods for measuring GDP and other standardized economic concepts, said tools and methods to take account of the value of natural resources, in order to enhance sustainable development;
42. *Encourages* parliaments to facilitate the participation of NGOs in strengthening popular support for environmental work, in particular to mitigate the effects of climate change.