

## I INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1. The session of a special character of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) was held in Nairobi May 10-18, 1982. The session was convened by decision of the UN General Assembly to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the UN Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm, in June 1972 and was motivated by "a need to revive the sense of urgency and commitment by governments for national and international cooperative action to protect and enhance the environment that found expression at the Stockholm Conference."

2. Two principal agenda items occupied most of the substantive work of the session: a review of the major achievements in the implementation of the Stockholm Action Plan for the Human Environment, and the formulation of recommendations concerning the major environmental trends to be addressed by UNEP over the next ten years. These found expression in the "Nairobi Declaration", which reaffirmed the commitment of the Stockholm Declaration and Action Plan of 1972, and a resolution entitled, "The Environment in 1982: Retrospect and Prospect."

3. The session, open to all UN member states, was attended by representatives of 105 governments, including three Heads of State and over 70 Ministers as well as numerous international bodies. The session preceded the regular tenth annual session of the Council in Nairobi, May 20-31, 1982.

4. Financial and other constraints restricted the convening of inter-governmental consultative meetings in all the regions in preparation for the special session. Consultations were, however, conducted over a three month period among permanent representatives in Nairobi, whose attention was devoted mainly to the preparation of the draft "Nairobi Declaration". A regional meeting held in Mexico City March 8-12, 1982 facilitated consultations among states in Latin America and the Caribbean.

5. The main preparatory work of the Secretariat and its consultants (among whom were Dr. David Munro, formerly of Environment Canada), centred on the single substantive document formally considered by the session, "The Environment in 1982: Retrospect and Prospect" (UNEP/GC(SSC)/2). It consolidated information treated more extensively in two major background documents: "Review of Major Achievements in the Implementation of the Action Plan for the Human Environment" (UNEP/GC(SSC)/INF.1) and "State of the World Environment, 1972-82" (UNEP/GC(SSC)/INF.2). Governments were given opportunities in advance of the session to comment on draft versions of these documents.

6. In addition to submitting some corrections and suggestions for textual improvements, Canada, along with Norway and Sweden, expressed strong concern that acid rain did not receive due recognition as a major environmental problem. As a result, the final version of the background document on the State of the world environment and the text of the consolidated document reflected a better appreciation of the severity of the acid rain problem.