



EXECUTIVE BOARD

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DRAFT WHO GLOBAL STRATEGY FOR HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT: SUMMARY¹

Report by the Director-General

The World Health Assembly, in resolution WHA45.31, requested the Director-General "to formulate a new WHO global strategy for environmental health based on the findings and recommendations of the WHO Commission on Health and Environment and on the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development". This report contains a summary of the draft global strategy in its section IV, following an introduction (section I), situation analysis (section II) and an analysis of bases for the global strategy (section III), and a final section on means of implementing it.

In accordance with the recommendations of the WHO Commission, the broad links between health and environment are taken in the context of sustainable development, going beyond the health determinants of the physical environment and encompassing the health consequences of interaction between human populations and the whole range of factors in their physical and social environments. The draft strategy was, therefore, developed in close cooperation with all the WHO units and programmes concerned at headquarters and in the regional offices, and an interregional meeting was convened in Geneva from 12 to 16 October 1992 to finalize it. While the contributions by the programmes for the promotion of environmental health and promotion of chemical safety remain central to the overall effort, the participation of WHO as a whole must be ensured if its responsibilities are to be discharged as outlined in the strategy. It is for these reasons that the strategy is for health and environment and entitled as such.

The draft strategy defines Organization-wide objectives and action programmes for their achievement. Its major components are an enhanced programme for the promotion of environmental health, an expanded programme for the promotion of chemical safety consistent with the mandate provided for the International Programme on Chemical Safety by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, a broadened action and partnership on health and environment throughout WHO, and strengthened partnerships with other international and nongovernmental organizations.

The Board is invited to consider the summary draft strategy presented in this report with a view to recommending the submission to the Forty-sixth World Health Assembly of the full text for its endorsement.

¹ Document EHE/92.6.

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The World Health Assembly in resolution WHA45.31 requested the Director-General "to formulate a new global WHO strategy for environmental health based on the findings and recommendations of the WHO Commission on Health and Environment and on the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development". This document presents the draft in summary form of a new Organization-wide global strategy for health and environment, to be implemented in partnership with other organizations.
2. The subject of "health and environment" studied by the WHO Commission goes beyond the traditional definition of environmental health applied to typical programmes carried out by public health authorities, and encompasses the health consequences of interaction between human populations and the whole range of factors in their physical and social environments. WHO's response must be broader than that which can be provided by the programmes for the promotion of environmental health and the promotion of chemical safety. While their contributions remain central to the overall effort, the participation of WHO as a whole must be ensured if its responsibilities for implementation of Agenda 21, adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in June 1992, and the WHO strategy, with its correspondingly broad title, are to be adequately discharged.
3. The draft strategy establishes a unifying framework for WHO action taking into consideration the proposed policy guidelines for the development of the Ninth General Programme of Work (see document EB91/20), and provides the basis for WHO programmes at headquarters, in regional offices and in countries to devise workplans in order to implement Agenda 21.

II. SITUATION ANALYSIS

Health, environment and development

4. At no time before have there been so many environmental problems arising that may have adverse effects on health, with which the health sector and WHO must contend. While health matters are inextricably linked to the outcome of activities in environment and development they are often taken for granted and either ignored or not dealt with adequately. The report of the WHO Commission and Agenda 21 of UNCED state emphatically that this situation must change. WHO must provide the leadership in promoting health in relation to environment and development.
5. The interdependence of health, development and environment is many-sided and complex, but two conditions dominate: (1) how well people's environment can supply the requirements to sustain life and health, and (2) how free their environment is from hazards to health.
6. For the developing world, the "traditional hazards" that produce environment-related infectious diseases remain the most pressing health aspect. Tropical diseases with an environmental etiology affect millions of people and frequently can be prevented and controlled through the application of sound environmental management measures. In developed countries diseases related to environmental pollution and life-styles based on high resource consumption are dominant. In addition, certain environmental phenomena have direct and indirect global health implications, e.g., the long-range transport of air pollutants, the transboundary movement of hazardous products and wastes, and stratospheric ozone depletion. While in 1992 the environmental situation is already serious in many places and many people are living under poor environmental health conditions or are at risk from environmental hazards to health, the future causes even greater concern. For example, projections for the next decade indicate that the population of the world will increase by nearly 20%, all the growth occurring essentially in the urban and peri-urban areas of developing countries where most people now live. As a result the current rapid rates of depletion of resources and accumulation of waste will increase where responsible authorities are even today unable to provide adequate basic services. Poverty, closely associated with ill-health and premature death, and a cause of environmental degradation, is increasing at an alarming rate. Urban environmental health problems are bound to increase as cities grow and reach "megacity" status, with all the associated conditions.
7. It can thus be expected that in the absence of new policies and action, and as the environmental threats to human health rapidly increase rather than subside, WHO will face new challenges.

Assessment of country capabilities and needs

8. Another aspect of the evolving environment and development challenge is the extent to which countries can protect their people against environmental hazards and become engaged in international efforts to protect the global commons. Although most developed countries have greatly expanded their capacity for this in the last two decades, political decisions on economic development sometimes disregard alternatives that support better environmental conditions for health. The large majority of the developing countries, however, are ill-prepared either to provide measures to protect health in their development planning or to deal with most of the environmental health problems that confront them.

9. In many countries, both industrialized and developing, health authorities do not actively participate in the processes for development and environmental planning and management. Governments have frequently failed to organize intersectoral cooperation for environmental health - action which is imperative given the interdisciplinary nature of the problems and the fact that resources are allocated to many different national agencies and programmes.

WHO activities related to health and environment

10. WHO has a long-standing mandate and broad experience and expertise in matters of health and environment. Its commitment to improved environmental health is reflected in its programme activities which include work to support the provision of basic health needs; promote health aspects of development planning and human settlements management; support measures for pollution prevention and control; evaluate health and environmental risks of chemicals; protect human health against hazards associated with biological and chemical contaminants and additives in food; promote and strengthen national workers' health programmes; use environmental management methods to reduce disease vector risks; and respond to the health aspects of environmental emergencies. These extensive activities in the many areas with which Agenda 21 is concerned, serve as a solid foundation for expanding WHO's activities and developing new programmes in the diverse and complex areas of environment and health.

11. Over the years and throughout a variety of programmes, WHO has considerably extended its activities for disseminating information on health-related conditions and technology and for cooperating with countries in developing various types of environmental health management capability. WHO's staff includes many professions, and over the years WHO has established connections with and the ability to mobilize competent experts throughout the world. WHO's structures in regional offices, environmental health centres and country offices to support field operations have worked in such a way as to strengthen national health development efforts. Cooperation with other organizations plays an important role in WHO's environmental health activities, as there are many joint projects.

III. BASES FOR THE GLOBAL STRATEGY

12. Attaining health for all requires knowledge not only about the environmental aspects of preventing and controlling disease but also about the way in which environmental management can improve human health conditions and further other economic and social goals. Good health will remain beyond the reach of hundreds of millions unless their living environments are health-promoting environments providing at least for their basic needs. The challenge for WHO is to forge the links needed to ensure effective activities at the local and national levels to improve health and environment. WHO must firmly work towards, not just advocate, a healthy and sustainable environment.

13. The Forty-fifth World Health Assembly adopted two resolutions on health and environment issues. The first, resolution WHA45.31, calls upon Member States to strengthen action to improve environmental conditions for human health through intersectoral, interdisciplinary approaches to development, emphasizing health protection and promotion, and community participation. It requests the Director-General to formulate a new global strategy for health and environment based on the findings of the WHO Commission on Health and Environment and on the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), in the broad context of environment and development, which can be taken to include measures related to the natural environment, the man-made environment, the economic and political sphere, and the social environment of communities. The second resolution, resolution WHA45.32, on the International Programme on Chemical Safety, requests the Director-General to strengthen the International Programme on

Chemical Safety and urges Member States to strengthen national measures for the safeguarding of human health and increase support to the International Programme.

14. The bases for the WHO global strategy for health and environment are the work of the WHO Commission and Agenda 21, the programme of action agreed upon by more than 150 Member States at UNCED. Agenda 21 reflects the consensus reached by governments as to what action they, international organizations and other bodies should implement to achieve sustainable development. Chapter 6 of Agenda 21, on protection and promotion of human health, specifically names WHO with respect to coordinating the implementation of the programmes dealt with there. Other chapters describe environmental health activities in which WHO must assume a substantial responsibility, e.g., chapter 19 on the environmentally sound management of toxic chemicals, and chapter 18 on protection of the quality and supply of freshwater resources, while yet others refer to activities for which WHO has a lesser responsibility.

IV. DRAFT WHO GLOBAL STRATEGY FOR HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

15. The global strategy must be a flexible Organization-wide framework to guide programmes at headquarters, regional and country level for the development of action plans based on the environmental health needs of countries. It must be concerned with both the physical and social environments as they affect health, and must stress problem-solving across programme boundaries, "empowerment" at the local level, improved management and decision-making based on sound information, and it must be directed toward prevention and control of diseases related to the environment.

Goals and objectives

16. The health and well-being of human beings is determined by a variety of physical, social, cultural, and institutional factors. The relations between these factors have several major implications, including satisfaction of basic physiological needs, limitation of exposure to environmental risks, and action to sustain health-promoting conditions. WHO and national goals for health and environment are based on such relations. As stated by the WHO Commission, the global goals are:

- achieving a sustainable basis for health for all;
- providing an environment that promotes health;
- making all individuals and organizations aware of their responsibility for health and its environmental basis.

17. In working toward these goals for health and environment, WHO will perform its basic functions of:

- supporting countries in capacity-building to establish the sustainable environmental conditions required for health for all, including the mobilization of resources;
- providing the internationally-evaluated scientific and technical basis for effective environmental health management;
- contributing to the solution of global problems affecting health.

18. Through these functions, WHO will pursue the following Organization-wide objectives.

- to support countries in providing the environmental elements required to meet basic health needs;
- to promote increased awareness and understanding of interaction between health, the environment and development among leaders and the public, so as to strengthen community action for health and sustainable development;
- to collaborate with national and local authorities in the creation of supportive environments for health;

- to promote the central role of health in decision-making and programmes on matters of environment and development, and to foster partnerships between the health sector and related sectors in these processes;
- to strengthen capabilities for emergency preparedness and response to cover the public health aspects of disasters and violent conflicts;
- to strengthen national capacities for human resources development in work related to health, the environment and development;
- to improve technical capabilities for the monitoring and assessment of environmental risks to health;
- to improve technical capabilities for the management of environmental risks to health, i.e. their prevention, abatement and control;
- to strengthen local, national and international environmental health information systems for the exchange and proper use of information;
- to promote research on a progressively stronger scientific and technical basis for the wide range of interventions needed to achieve the health goals of sustainable development;
- to foster environmentally safe and sound methods and technology for the effective control, prevention and treatment of disease and disability;
- to promote and support other institutional and sectoral capacities for improving progressively policies, plans, legislation and action on health, the environment and development.

19. These objectives are interrelated and reflect the optimum scope of work to meet the needs in all Member States. They cover the broad range of WHO's activities, among which regional and country-level offices determine priorities, fix targets, phasing and decide the timing for action in particular countries or groups of countries; and they are central to the major components of the strategy in the following sections.

Components of the global strategy

20. The global strategy has four separate, but interrelated components:

- (1) an enhanced programme for the promotion of environmental health;
- (2) an expanded programme for the promotion of chemical safety;
- (3) broader action and collaboration for health and environment throughout WHO;
- (4) stronger partnerships with other international and nongovernmental organizations.

Enhanced programme for the promotion of environmental health

21. The programme for the promotion of environmental health will serve as the lead programme in the implementation of the global strategy on health and environment. The enhanced programme is based on a new orientation for the preparation and implementation of programme activities.

22. Activities will be oriented to three major areas of environmental health: rural, urban and global. In the new strategy, special emphasis will be placed on urban areas, where the expanding urban population and the centres of modern economic development give rise to special health-and-environment problems. Primary attention will continue to be given to the need to provide essential services for rural areas. Global issues affecting the protection and promotion of human health comprise the third area to which the programme will be oriented. This triple focus will serve as a means to integrate the different elements and tackle the diverse and complex environmental health problems more readily in their entirety, wherever and however they occur.

The programme will thus follow a holistic approach, aiming at the creation of supportive environments for health in both the urban and the rural context.

23. Proposed activities under the new strategy are presented below. For the sake of brevity in this summary, these have been grouped into two categories, the important features of each being highlighted: first, those areas of activity that are well developed, but which will be augmented; and secondly, those areas of activity that have not played a dominant role to date, but which will receive emphasis.

24. First, in order to augment its support to countries in providing the environmental elements required to meet basic health needs, activities will be based on the principle of community participation and place emphasis on technological applications appropriate to underserved communities, the social development aspects of basic services, and the primary environmental care approach. Special attention will be given to the WHO initiative to support countries and peoples in greatest need. In the area of human resources development, training activities will be broadened to incorporate more of the diverse skills required by those working in all sectors in the area of health and environment to provide transdisciplinary knowledge and leadership. The strengthening of institutional and sectoral capacities will be part of all programme activities and will include cooperation in the preparation of health-based environmental guidelines and criteria, support in upgrading laboratories for monitoring compliance with standards, and advice on control technology and modern management approaches. Activities in the area of management of environmental risks to health will be expanded and intensified, emphasizing the establishment of preventive planning programmes that give prominence to health. At the local, country, regional and global level, activities for the monitoring and assessment of environmental risks to health will be directed toward strengthening environmental health management capacities and the information basis for the selection of priorities, preventive planning, and environmental and development decision-making and management. Cost-benefit analysis of the various alternative actions will be stressed as a decision tool.

25. Secondly, innovative activities will be pursued, in collaboration with other programmes, and initiatives from all sectors that can contribute to the creation of supportive environments for health in different settings will be encouraged. To promote awareness and strengthen community action for health and sustainable development, increasing support will be given for the preparation of relevant information for the public, and of workshops and seminars to inform decision-makers on matters affecting health and environment. In order to promote the central role of health in decision-making and programmes on matters of environment and development, there will be close collaboration with other organizations to incorporate health aspects in their programmes and, at the country level, support will be given to the health sector in intersectoral activities. Cooperation with countries in the creation and implementation of environmental health information systems will be expanded, including the collection, analysis, interpretation and dissemination of information about environmental health conditions at the local and country level. Management information data bases of programmes and projects will be used as a tool for planning, coordination and resource mobilization, with a view to the integration of relevant activities in various programmes and sectors. There will be a major role for WHO, under the enhanced programme for the promotion of environmental health, in developing and supporting the new research agenda related to the environment, health and development, concentrating on improving the capacities of governments, institutions, enterprises and agencies to carry out such investigations, to set research priorities and to improve communications among researchers and between them and decision-makers and the general population. A greater role will be played in supporting activities for emergency preparedness and response. The technical expertise needed in developing preparedness plans and responding to emergencies that have health and environmental consequences will be provided. To foster environmentally safe and sound methods and technology, there will be cooperation with countries for the development of suitable methods for assessing, monitoring and controlling the environmental effects of health programmes.

Expanded programme for the promotion of chemical safety

26. Since 1980 WHO's work in the field of chemical safety has largely been undertaken in collaboration with ILO and UNEP through the joint International Programme on Chemical Safety (IPCS). The secretariat of IPCS is located within WHO and the director of the programme for the promotion of chemical safety serves as the Director of IPCS. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) recommended that IPCS should be the nucleus for international cooperation on environmentally-sound management of toxic chemicals. As a result, IPCS will have a greatly expanded role in the future. Negotiations are currently taking place between the three cooperating organizations of IPCS to establish the

manner in which IPCS will function in the future. Early in 1993 these negotiations will be broadened to involve other potential partners in an expanded IPCS.

27. The UNCED proposals call for an adaptation of the current concept of IPCS to provide the following functions: (1) undertaking activities in support of environmentally-sound management of chemicals; (2) providing mechanisms for ensuring coordination of related international activities; (3) acting initially as an interim secretariat for the preparation of an intergovernmental meeting to be convened before the end of 1993 by the Executive Heads of WHO, UNEP and ILO, to consider the establishment of an intergovernmental mechanism on chemical risk assessment and management.
 28. The draft global strategy includes an expanded programme for the promotion of chemical safety with four main themes: (1) chemical risk assessment; (2) chemical safety communication; (3) chemical emergencies; and (4) chemical risk management.
 29. A brief review of strategic action under the programme for the promotion of chemical safety contributing to the attainment of the draft strategy's Organization-wide objectives is presented below. It should be noted that the scope of IPCS activities as carried out by cooperating organizations is broader than that of the programme for the promotion of chemical safety under the mandate of WHO.
 30. In support of the monitoring and assessment of environmental risks, the completion and dissemination of evaluations of the risks to human health and the environment of chemicals will be accelerated; health- or environment-based guidelines will be prepared giving values for acceptable exposure; activities and research will continue for the initiation, improvement, validation and harmonization of methods for the evaluation of health and environmental hazards and risks of chemicals and chemical processes.
 31. Under the theme "chemical safety communication", human resources development and institutional and sectoral capacities will be enhanced by the promotion of use in countries of safety data in such forms as the IPCS International Chemical Safety Card. Through IPCS the principles for harmonized chemical hazard classification will be developed and the necessary research promoted. Information systems on toxic chemicals will be strengthened, in particular to provide the internationally evaluated data on chemicals and chemical risks required by Member States to implement international guidelines for safety.
 32. In order to strengthen countries' capabilities for emergency preparedness and response, WHO will cooperate under this expanded programme in international efforts for the establishment of chemical emergency information response centres, including the preparation of guidelines for health sector involvement and the development of networking arrangements. National programmes for the prevention of poisonings by chemicals and the management of cases of poisoning will be reinforced and expanded.
 33. In relation to management of environmental risks to health, national capabilities will be strengthened through support for the preparation of chemical inventories, legislation and provisions for implementation and enforcement, and institutional arrangements. Human resources development for chemical risk management will be promoted. Environmentally safe and sound methods and technology, including approaches to management of the prevention and control of diseases and disabilities related to chemicals, will be fostered through the promotion of safer alternative chemicals and better approaches to their use.
- Broader action and collaboration for health and environment throughout WHO**
34. WHO as a whole must contribute to varying degrees to the Organization's environmental health objectives and to attaining sustainable development; for the implementation of action programmes a comprehensive approach is required, encompassing all aspects of problems related to health and environment, combining many parallel activities, and applying the wide range of skills, resources, data and materials available in WHO programmes.
 35. Besides the core programmes for the promotion of environmental health and chemical safety, those concerned are of three kinds: (1) technical and disease-oriented programmes concerned with conditions and interventions in the physical environment; (2) technical programmes concerned with conditions and interventions in the social environment; and (3) programmes concerned with institutional development, and support in the form of resources and measures to facilitate their flow to countries.

36. Such broader action in WHO will necessarily take time to evolve as related elements of different programmes are identified, networks and interprogramme partnership developed, and resources mobilized and allocated. Activities in programmes having components related to health and environment, will thus receive support from others in their respective areas of expertise.

37. To achieve the stated goals in health and environment, broader action and partnerships are needed from all programmes concerned in each of the areas with respect to the Organization-wide objectives (enumerated in paragraph 18 above). A summary of the areas to be given higher priority is presented below.

38. Collaborative action within WHO related to the environmental elements required to meet basic health needs will focus on the reduction of health risks arising from deficiencies in food safety, safe water supply, adequate sanitation, and adequate shelter. Such activities will require the close involvement of staff of the programmes for the promotion of environmental health and for the promotion of chemical safety in the delivery of relevant elements of other WHO programmes, especially those operating in the protective aspects of human reproduction and maternal and child health, and in the prevention of communicable and degenerative diseases, food and nutrition-related disorders, diarrhoeal diseases and other diseases related to poor living conditions (i.e., the programmes dealing with tropical diseases, communicable diseases, diarrhoeal diseases, acute respiratory infections, nutrition and food safety).

39. Creating supportive environments for health is a public health approach to the improvement of and support for the "settings" determining health, not only for purposes of health protection, but also in order to promote and create the best possible health. WHO programmes that emphasize a "health setting" approach include the programmes for health education, occupational health, and health protection and promotion. For example, the "Healthy Schools" approach in health education recognizes that every aspect of school life can influence health and may be adjusted to promote health. A similar argument informs various occupational health activities in the workplace and health protection and promotion focusing on vulnerable groups.

40. Promoting the central role of health decision-making and programmes on matters of environment and development is one of the most important aspects of the new global strategy, for if health issues remain on the sidelines the needed improvements will not happen. An important part in the effort must be that of strengthening health services, but programmes with activities involving other sectors, for example the control of tropical diseases (which involves agriculture), occupational health (which involves labour and business) and injury prevention (which involves transportation) are significant for technical capability-strengthening and advocacy.

41. Coordination of activities for the exchange and use of information and the development of environmental health information systems is paramount to the establishment of integrated approaches to environmental health planning and monitoring. The programmes for epidemiological surveillance and health situation and trend assessment, information technology, and library and health literature services can contribute substantive information and technological expertise to strengthen country programmes and establish links between sectors and between other WHO programmes.

42. In order to advance environmentally safe and sound methods and technology in disease prevention, control and treatment, it is again necessary for the programmes for the promotion of environmental health and for the promotion of chemical safety to be coordinated with such programmes as those dealing with tropical diseases, diarrhoeal disease and strengthening of health services in providing reliable information on disease control methods, in promoting improved management of medical wastes, and in establishing and refining methods of environmental impact assessment and promoting their use in country health planning and programming.

Stronger partnerships with other international and nongovernmental organizations

43. Coordination of its programmes with those of other organizations of the United Nations system, nongovernmental organizations, appropriate governmental bodies and the private sector forms an important part of WHO's global strategy for health and environment. WHO will not only continue to participate in established coordinating mechanisms but will also be involved in those to be established in the United Nations system as a follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). Most important will be an inter-agency committee on sustainable development, which is a subsidiary body of the

Administrative Committee on Coordination, with wide-ranging responsibilities. As a consequence of UNCED there will be much closer cooperation between agencies, particularly at the country level.

44. In implementing the strategy, particular importance will be given to collaboration with international and other organizations to ensure the incorporation of health aspects into their programmes, the expansion of collaborative activities in environmental health to include the socioeconomic development aspects, and an increase in the level of active cooperation with nongovernmental organizations, drawing upon their special skills and capacities.

V. MEANS OF IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGY

45. The implementation of the global strategy will be an evolutionary process engaging the responsibility of all staff in programmes at headquarters, regional office and particularly country level. WHO activities in the area of health and environment have been traditionally carried out primarily through a vertical approach. The increased complexity of problems requires greater flexibility allowing a coordinated response and judicious use of resources.

Planning at the national level

46. One of the cornerstones for implementation of the strategy is a more systematic and effective planning process at national, regional and global levels. A key recommendation of UNCED is that countries should draw up national plans for sustainable development. The health sector should play a leading role in drafting the sections on health and environment in national plans. WHO will encourage and support the health sector in this process, cooperating in the elaboration of national plans on health and environment, as appropriate. National plans will be widely used as a basis for planning WHO country activities and for framing regional and global plans on health and environment. They will also provide a vehicle for stronger collaboration with the other sectors and organizations and for the mobilization of resources.

Organizational arrangements

47. The implementation of the strategy will require changes in the manner in which measures to improve health and environment are planned and carried out within WHO. The aim will be to increase collaboration between programmes. Their orientation to rural, urban and global aspects will facilitate the integration of activities at country, regional and global levels. Existing mechanisms such as those to integrate measures for urban primary health care and healthy cities provide good examples. A multidisciplinary team approach to support for the establishment and implementation of national plans will be adopted.

48. Mechanisms are needed to ensure integrated, comprehensive action in WHO rather than the more compartmentalized action of the past. Appropriate activities must be determined in all WHO programmes concerned and links must be formed for effective implementation of the new strategy, ensuring that participating programmes share both resources and responsibility for management and emphasizing the mutually beneficial opportunities for collaboration. A high-level internal task force or steering committee will be necessary to guide such cooperative action.

49. The regional centres for environmental health which are established in four WHO regions will play a key role in tackling within the context of the strategy the environmental health problems in countries. This type of support is also needed in the South-East Asia Region and the African Region; consideration will be given to having the environmental health centre in the Western Pacific Region serve the South-East Asia Region as well, and to the establishment of a similar centre (or centres) in the African Region.

50. At the country level, WHO must ensure that there is interaction with all concerned, including other sectors than the health sector. In view of the many common interests in health, the environment and development, such interaction is essential to the strategy's objectives. The way to success is through a strong commitment by WHO's country offices to the strategy. WHO representatives should be fully aware of, committed to and ready for dynamic and effective action in matters affecting health and environment in the countries, including measures to foster intersectoral cooperation at national level and collaboration between international agencies, and they should receive increased technical and other support.

51. Major emphasis will be placed on cooperative programmes with other international organizations and on the contribution of WHO collaborating centres. The existing cooperative arrangements with organizations such as UNEP, UNDP and the World Bank will be strengthened and new ones will be developed. There will be increased reliance on WHO collaborating centres, and new ones will be created. The centres assume responsibility for numerous international tasks on behalf of the Organization, and their access to specialized skills provides significant intellectual input.

Information for better management

52. A major requirement for the implementation of the strategy is a much improved mechanism for access to and exchange of programme information at all levels, on current and planned WHO projects, and on the activities of countries, other organizations of the United Nations system, and external support agencies. An environmental information system for management and development activities, currently under development in the programme for the promotion of environmental health, will provide a starting point.

Meeting resource needs

53. A combination of direct bilateral funding for country programmes and multilateral funding for regional and global programmes will be needed to implement the strategy. As regards international programme support, the UNCED secretariat noted that the total environmental-health-related activities of Agenda 21 may well cost some US\$ 250 million annually. By comparison, the current budgetary provisions for the existing programmes of environmental health and promotion of chemical safety are approximately US\$ 40 million, of which US\$ 22 million are regular budget funds and US\$ 18 million extrabudgetary.

54. As part of the follow-up to UNCED, the specialized agencies of the United Nations will be required to establish the costs involved in carrying out their responsibilities under Agenda 21. Various options will be explored for increasing the availability of internal resources for activities related to health and environment through innovative and flexible approaches to budgeting that would promote collaboration between programmes. This could provide opportunities in the short term for accelerating the implementation of the WHO strategy.

55. During UNCED, financial mechanisms were considered and it was made clear that the "success of the follow-up to the Conference is dependent upon an effective link between substantive action and financial support, and ... effective cooperation between United Nations bodies and the multilateral financial organizations". It was stated that organizations of the United Nations system "may consider establishing special arrangements with donors and financial institutions for project implementation that may require additional resources". UNEP has traditionally been closely linked to the WHO programmes in question, and joint projects have received substantial support. Bearing in mind the specific focus of and scope for environmental health activities in the context of environment and (sustainable) development, the three mechanisms described below appear most relevant and promising for obtaining resources for the global strategy.

56. UNDP was assigned the role of "the lead agency in organizing United Nations system efforts towards capacity-building at the local, national and regional levels". Its CAPACITY 21 initiative should mobilize donor resources on behalf of governments for capacity-building in recipient countries, "drawing on the expertise of the specialized agencies".

57. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is managed jointly by the World Bank, UNDP and UNEP, and its funding is designed to achieve global environmental benefits. In the follow-up to UNCED, the initial concentration on four programme areas (global warming, biodiversity, international waters, ozone depletion) should be enlarged to encompass other programme areas of Agenda 21 promising global environmental benefits.

58. Bilateral donors have in the past provided extensive support for WHO's environmental health work in technical cooperation programmes as well as in global activities. Increased direct bilateral support will be needed for the global and regional components of the global strategy.

Monitoring and evaluation

59. Periodic regional and global environmental health reviews and evaluations will be made under the strategy as part of the global evaluation of the health-for-all strategy. Indicators of environmental health status, which are currently being established, will be used to monitor the situation in the world, evaluate progress and prepare status and progress reports on health and environmental quality, in collaboration with other programmes and partner agencies.

60. As the global strategy has been prepared in response to Agenda 21, progress in its implementation will be a measure of the degree to which WHO has contributed to the achievement of the objectives of Agenda 21 in its area of competence.

61. Pursuant to the request of UNCED, regular reports will have to be submitted to the newly established high-level commission on sustainable development by specialized agencies on their plans and programmes for the implementation of Agenda 21. The progress reports on the global strategy will be the basis for reporting to WHO's governing bodies and to the high-level commission. In addition, the specialized agencies are expected to report on the world situation with regard to sustainable development and related environmental matters. Data and assessments for this purpose will be prepared as part of the information component of the global strategy.

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