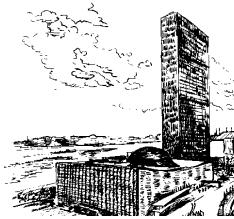


## Part 5



# Science, Technology, and Research

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## UN Environment Program (UNEP)

The UN Environmental Program (UNEP) is headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya and headed by Executive Director Klaus Toepfer (Germany). It provides liaison and back-stopping on administrative and substantive matters in its six regional offices located in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America, and West Asia. UNEP programs are increasingly implemented through regional offices. The North American office, opened in May 2000 at the request of the United States, is located in Washington, D.C. and is currently headed by a U.S. citizen. UNEP is the principal, though not the only, UN forum for global environmental issues. The United States has been the leading financial and technical contributor to UNEP since its creation in 1972. UNEP's responsibilities are to assess the state of the environment, to provide early warning of environmental threats, and to serve as the catalyst of the United Nations in promoting international cooperation and action in response to such threats. Guidance and oversight are provided by the Governing Council, which is composed of 58 elected member states, including the United States.

In February 2001, the Governing Council (GC) of UNEP met in Nairobi. The GC adopted non-binding resolutions on a number of issues of importance to the United States, including land degradation, hazardous chemicals and pesticides, protection of the marine environment, and support to Africa. The GC also established an intergovernmental working group to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the UN system in dealing with the environment. UNEP has also established a Post-Conflict Assessment Unit, to study environmental degradation in the wake of war or other violent conflict. In 2001, a UNEP team studied the effects of depleted uranium used in the 1999 air attacks in Serbia and Montenegro, finding that they had caused minimal long-term damage. Inclusion of an American specialist on the team ensured the objectivity of the results.

Under UNEP auspices, the United States participated in negotiation of environmental agreements on a number of issues, including atmosphere, toxic chemicals, hazardous wastes, marine pollution, and desertification

and land degradation with success. One recent case was the conclusion (December 2000) and signature (May 2001) of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs). The United States played a leading role in negotiating this Convention, which requires states to take steps, similar to those already taken in the United States, to control the production, use, and release of twelve highly toxic chemicals that persist in the environment (including DDT, PCBs, and dioxins) and that can migrate great distances. The President of the United States endorsed the POPs Convention on April 18, 2001, and it is now pending before the Senate. Concerted international action will improve the U.S. environment and public health.

Strengthening UNEP's mandated role of providing environmental information, monitoring, assessment, and early warning of environmental threats has been another U.S. goal. In 2001, UNEP designed capacity-building programs in Africa to help countries develop and enforce environmental laws and improve freshwater sanitation. The Capacity Building Task Force, a joint initiative of UNEP and the UN Conference on Trade and Development, was created to strengthen individual countries' appreciation for the relationship among the environment and trade and development issues. UNEP works closely with governments, particularly those of developing countries, to enhance their institutional and human capacities for integrating environmental considerations in their trade and development initiatives and to address the environmental consequences of trade liberalization policies.

In recent years, UNEP has dealt with internal reform, with some promising results. Still more needs to be done. Top U.S. priorities have been management and financial and institutional health. With U.S. support, Toepfer has instituted internal reforms in recent years to improve the organization's efficiency, transparency, and responsiveness to member states. He has achieved some promising results, including a more efficient organizational structure that permits a cross-sectoral approach to programs.

UNEP has a budget of \$98.67 million, of which 10.34 percent comes from the United States. Out of the budget, 84.64 percent goes to programs, while 15.36 percent goes to administration. Americans filled 6 percent of UNEP's 399 professional posts in 2001.

## **Protection of World Climate**

The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC) and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) are the premier international structures for the scientific assessment of climate change and for multilateral efforts to address climate change. At its current level, U.S. participation in the FCCC and the IPCC encourages international approaches on climate change that are science-based and consistent with U.S. environmental and economic interests.

The Department of State requested over \$6 million for fiscal year 2001 to maintain the traditional level of support for, and participation in, the FCCC and the IPCC. This traditional level of U.S. voluntary contributions is based on the UN indicative scale of 22 percent.

### **UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC)**

The FCCC entered into force in March 1994, and there are currently over 180 parties. The FCCC's ultimate objective is to promote stabilization of atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases at levels that would prevent dangerous human interference with the climate system. The FCCC parties adopted the Kyoto Protocol in December 1997, which would require developed nations to reduce their collective greenhouse gas emissions by approximately 5.2 percent below 1990 levels during the period 2008–2012. Negotiations to elaborate on the Kyoto Protocol began at the Fourth Conference of Parties (COP-4), which met in Buenos Aires, Argentina in November 1998. At the Seventh Conference of the Parties in Marrakech in November 2001, parties finalized the rules to implement the Kyoto Protocol.

President Bush announced in March 2001 that the United States will not ratify the Kyoto Protocol because it exempts developing countries from binding emission targets and because it would cause serious harm to the U.S. economy. The United States will not interfere with the efforts of other countries that work to implement the Kyoto Protocol. The continuation of U.S. participation in, and support for, the FCCC helped advance specific Administration initiatives regarding technology transfer to, and capacity-building in, developing countries and the enhancement of bilateral climate change cooperation. The United States contributed \$4.9 million to the FCCC in 2001.

### **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)**

The IPCC was created in 1988 as a joint effort of the World Meteorological Organization and the UN Environment Program. The IPCC conducts periodic assessments of studies on the science of climate change, its potential impacts, and ways that countries adapt to it and seek to mitigate it. In 2001, the IPCC released its Third Assessment Report after nearly three years of study and review. Previous comprehensive assessments were issued in 1990 and 1995.

U.S. scientists are well represented in the activities of the IPCC, including in the preparation of IPCC assessment reports. The continuation of U.S. participation in and support for the IPCC helped advance specific Administration initiatives regarding climate change science and technology, including global observation systems, carbon sequestration, and climate modeling. In 2001, the United States contributed \$1.6 million to the IPCC, out of a total budget of \$4.7 million (7.7 Swiss francs).

## **UN Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR)**

The General Assembly established UN Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR) in 1955 to provide continuous review and evaluation of the effects of ionizing radiation on humans and their environment. Governments and international organizations around the world rely on UNSCEAR evaluations for estimating radiological risk, establishing protection and safety standards, and regulating radioactive materials. UNSCEAR's work is also of significant interest to many U.S. agencies, including the National Regulatory Commission, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Departments of Health and Human Services and Energy.

The Committee meets annually and issues a comprehensive report every four years, based on input from outside scientific consultants. For its 50th session, April 22–28, 2001 in Vienna, Austria, the Committee approved and published a 160–page special report on the hereditary effects of radiation. Dr. Fred Mettler of the University of New Mexico led the U.S. delegation.

The UNSCEAR Secretariat is composed of a small office staff in Vienna with a full–time scientist or scientific secretary. Since its transfer to Vienna in 1974, UNSCEAR has been administratively attached to the UN Environmental Program (UNEP) in Nairobi, Kenya. In recent years, UNEP's administrative and financial support has diminished. The UNSCEAR yearly allotment for consultants, staff, and representatives dropped from \$184,950 in 1994 to \$91,400 in 2001. Funding for scientific consultants has decreased from \$84,250 in 1994–1995 to \$26,000 in 2000–2001. In addition, a 3 percent overall reduction mandated by the General Assembly for all agencies had an impact on UNSCEAR's consultant services. The United States has expressed the concern that these drastic cuts in UNSCEAR's budget hamper its ability to carry out its mission. Further, the United States has maintained that the relationship between UNSCEAR and UNEP merits closer scrutiny, if UNSCEAR is to continue operating as an effective independent scientific body.