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Item 8 (a) of the provisional agenda

**MATTERS ARISING FROM THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY:
SPECIAL SESSION ON AGENDA 21**

Inputs from the UNFCCC

Note by the secretariat

I. MANDATE

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 50/113, invited the Conference of the Parties (COP) to provide an input to its special session for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21. The COP, in response to this invitation, requested the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) to consider this matter at its fifth session, and to provide an input to the General Assembly on behalf of the COP. It further requested the Convention secretariat to submit a brief report to the SBI to facilitate its work on preparing the input (FCCC/CP/1996/15/Add.1).

II. SCOPE

2. This note contains elements based on decisions of the COP, and identifies possible areas for consideration by the General Assembly in determining future actions and priorities in the implementation of Agenda 21 related to protection of the global climate. Account has been taken, by the secretariat in the preparation of this report, of the review of Agenda 21 by the United Nations Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD).

III. POSSIBLE ACTION BY THE SUBSIDIARY BODY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

3. The SBI may wish to consider this note in preparing the input to the General Assembly, on behalf of the COP. It may also wish to request the Executive Secretary to transmit this input to the General Assembly for consideration at its special session, scheduled to be held in June 1997; make available this input to the Commission on Sustainable Development at its fifth session, scheduled to be held in April 1997; and, inform the COP at its third session on the action taken.

IV. ELEMENTS FOR THE INPUT TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

4. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which was adopted in 1992, has received 165 instruments of ratification or accession assuring almost universal membership of States.

5. The Convention was one of the key outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), and its objectives have a close relationship to the goals of sustainable development. It has linkages to the framework of Agenda 21, in particular the energy, transport, industry, agriculture, forestry and waste management sectors. An important element in the global effort to address climate change and its impacts is the open exchange of information on the implementation of commitments of Parties under the Convention; this is also contributing to the developing international debate on modifying longer-term trends in consumption and production patterns.

6. Another link to furthering the goals of sustainable development is the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (jointly established by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)) which has initiated steps towards preparation of its Third Assessment Report to develop a better scientific understanding of issues related to climate change, its impacts and possible response strategies. This report will be of great value to policy makers to place perspectives on climate change in the context of sustainable development. New initiatives for cooperative implementation, including technology transfer and diffusion, between all Parties to the Convention and with the major groups in civil society are being explored. Through these linkages the key themes of Agenda 21 pertaining to integrated policy development, citizen participation in decision-making, institutional capacity building and global partnerships involving many stakeholders, are being addressed by the UNFCCC.

7. The UNFCCC has also taken first steps to deal with the continued rise of emissions of greenhouse gases. The Geneva Ministerial Declaration, of which the COP took note at its second session, called for the acceleration of negotiations on the text of a legally binding protocol or another legal instrument for appropriate action by the developed country-parties beyond the year 2000. The General Assembly may wish to encourage member States to

agree on a satisfactory result of these negotiations at the third session of the COP, scheduled to be held in Kyoto in December 1997.

8. In addition, the growing engagement by developing country Parties is advancing. Steps are being taken by these Parties to prepare their initial communication of information related to implementation. The Global Environment Facility (GEF), as the interim operating entity of the financial mechanism of the Convention, is supporting developing country Parties in implementing their commitments by funding enabling activities such as planning and endogenous capacity building. The Geneva Ministerial Declaration called on the GEF to provide expeditious and timely support to these Parties and initiate work towards a full replenishment in 1997.

9. A number of initiatives of the Commission on Sustainable Development and the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development are relevant for promoting United Nations system-wide support for protection of the global climate. These include the link between energy and sustainable development across the system of the United Nations, the development of an energy strategy that would promote a balanced and mutually reinforcing approach to economic, social and environmental aspects of energy development, the fostering of partnerships with the private sector; the improvement of the flow of integrated information based on national profiles, communications and reports; the strengthening of access to existing information systems; and, the work on the development of indicators of sustainable development.

10. In considering the area of energy and industry, the General Assembly may wish to focus on priorities including the issues of how developing countries can acquire the levels of energy needed for their development while avoiding, to the extent possible, emissions of greenhouse gases; the importance of promoting the use of sustainable and environmentally sound renewable energy sources; the need for increased research by Governments and the private sector into energy and material efficiency and more environmentally sound energy production technologies; and arrangements that might foster links between energy and sustainable development within the system of the United Nations.

11. Action on these areas and priorities for future international action in the implementation of Agenda 21 for protection of the global climate will help to involve the whole international community in promoting the effective implementation of the Convention.

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