

## QUESTIONS RELATING TO SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

### 1346 (XLV). Question of convening an international conference on the problems of human environment

*The Economic and Social Council,*

*Noting* the continuing and accelerating impairment of the quality of the human environment caused by such factors as air and water pollution, erosion, and other forms of soil deterioration, secondary effects of biocides, waste and noise,

*Concerned* with the consequent effects thereof on the condition of man, his physical and mental well-being, his dignity and his enjoyment of basic human rights in developing as well as developed countries.

*Convinced* of the urgent need for intensified action, at the national and international level, in order to limit and, where possible, to eliminate the impairment of the human environment and in order to protect and improve the natural surroundings in the interest of man,

*Convinced* also that due attention to problems of the human environment is essential for sound economic and social development,

*Bearing in mind* the important work on some problems of the human environment at present being undertaken by organizations in the United Nations system, in particular the United Nations (including the Economic Commission for Europe), the International Labour Organisation, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Health Organization, the World Meteorological Organization, the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization and the International Atomic Energy Agency, as referred to in the report of the Secretary-General on activities of United Nations organizations and programmes relevant to the human environment,<sup>34</sup>

*Aware* of the important work being done on problems of the human environment by Governments as well as by national and international non-governmental organizations such as the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and the International Biological Programme,

*Noting* furthermore with particular interest the arrangements for the Intergovernmental Conference of Experts on the Scientific Basis for Rational Use and Conservation of the Resources of the Biosphere organized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, with the participation of the United Nations, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Health Organization to be held in Paris from 4 to 13 September 1968, as well as the decision of the Economic Commission for Europe to convene in 1970 or 1971 a Meeting of Governmental Experts on Problems Relating to the Environment,

*Bearing in mind* the valuable reports on environmental pollution and its control prepared by the World Health Organization, and on conservation and rational use of the environment prepared by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Food

and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, for the forty-fourth session of the Council.<sup>35</sup>

*Desiring* to encourage work in this field and to give it a common outlook and direction,

*Believing* it desirable to provide a framework for a comprehensive consideration within the United Nations of the problems of human environment in order to focus the attention of Governments and public opinion on the importance of this question and also to identify those aspects of it that can only, or best, be solved through international co-operation and agreement,

1. *Recommends* that the General Assembly, at its twenty-third session, consider ways and means to further the objectives set out above including, in particular, the desirability of convening a United Nations conference on problems of the human environment, taking into consideration, *inter alia*, the views expressed during the forty-fifth session of the Economic and Social Council<sup>36</sup> and the results of the Intergovernmental Conference of Experts on the Scientific Basis for Rational Use and Conservation of the Resources of the Biosphere;

2. *Considers* that, in order to assure the success of a conference, should its convening be decided by the General Assembly, detailed and careful preparations would be necessary and *recommends* that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General, after obtaining the views of Governments of Member States and those of the Advisory Committee on the Application of Science and Technology to Development, in co-operation with the appropriate organizations in the United Nations system, including the regional economic commissions and the United Nations Economic and Social Office in Beirut, to submit to the Council at its forty-seventh session a report concerning:

- (a) The scope and progress of work already being done on the main problems of the human environment by international and national organizations, at the intergovernmental, governmental and non-governmental levels, and the principal areas which require international co-operation;
- (b) The areas which might with particular advantage be considered at an international conference on problems of the human environment and a suggested programme of work for a conference;
- (c) Alternative methods for adequate preparations for a conference, and the length of time necessary for such preparations;
- (d) A possible time and place for a conference;
- (e) The possible range of financial implications for the United Nations of the holding of a conference;

3. *Proposes* to the General Assembly that it include in the agenda of its twenty-third session an item entitled "The problems of human environment".

*1555th plenary meeting,  
30 July 1968.*

<sup>34</sup> *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Forty-fifth Session, Annexes, agenda item 12, document E/4553.*

<sup>35</sup> E/4457 and E/4458.

<sup>36</sup> *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Forty-fifth Session, 1547th, 1548th, 1553rd and 1555th meetings.*