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**United Nations Environment Assembly of the  
United Nations Environment Programme  
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Item 5 of the provisional agenda\*

**Performance of the programme of work and budget,  
including implementation of the resolutions of the  
Environment Assembly**

**Progress in the implementation of resolution 2/2 on the role and  
functions of the regional forums of ministers of the environment  
and environmental authorities**

**Report of the Executive Director**

*Summary*

In its resolution 2/2 on the role and functions of the regional forums of ministers of the environment and environment authorities, the United Nations Environment Assembly requested the United Nations Environment Programme to support and facilitate the convening and/or strengthening of existing regional forums of ministers of the environment and environment authorities, and to support and facilitate the convening of new such regional forums.

The resolution is consistent with expected accomplishment (c) of the Environmental Governance subprogramme, namely “Countries increasingly mainstream environmental sustainability in national and regional development policies and plans”.

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\* UNEP/EA.3/1.

## **I. Introduction**

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to resolution 2/2 of the United Nations Environment Assembly on the role and functions of the regional forums of ministers of the environment and environment authorities. It provides an update on progress on the implementation of the resolution, together with recommendations and suggested actions.

## **II. Progress in the implementation of resolution 2/2**

2. The United Nations Environment Programme has supported the convening of key regional forums of environment ministers and environment authorities across the globe, as well as related intersessional preparatory and consultative meetings.

3. The African Ministerial Conference on the Environment has played a key role in facilitating the development and implementation of regional strategies, initiatives and action plans, such as the African Strategy on Combating Illegal Exploitation and Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora, the environmental action plan for the Planning and Coordinating Agency of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative and the framework for the initiative for the Adaptation of African Agriculture to Climate Change. In August 2016, the Environment Programme supported a conference to convene African regional joint preparatory meetings for the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. The sixteenth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, for which the Environment Programme served as the secretariat, was held in Libreville in June 2017.

4. The Environment Programme, together with the United Nations Development Programme, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, organized a round table on Sustainable Development Goal 14 on 29 March 2017 as part of the fourth Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development. At the Asia-Pacific Regional Forum on Health and Environment, held in October 2016, environment and health ministers and related officials from 14 countries in South-East and North-East Asia adopted the Manila Declaration on Health and Environment, which outlines the commitment of those countries to meeting specific sustainable development goals and targets. The Environment Programme has been working closely with subregional organizations, including the South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, to support senior officials and subregional ministerial forums. The Environment Programme and ESCAP co-organized the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Summit on the Environment from 5 to 8 September 2017 in Bangkok. The Summit brought together the second session of the Environment Programme's Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific and the seventh session of the ESCAP Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific.

5. In Europe, the sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health was held in Ostrava, Czechia, from 13 to 15 June 2017. On the margins of the event, the first-ever European regional high-level consultation of the United Nations Environment Assembly was held, at which 26 countries were represented. In addition, the Environment Programme supported a meeting of countries under the Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development and facilitated the review process of the Regional Environmental Action Plan in Central Asia. The United Nations Environment Assembly is now a standing agenda item of the Committee on Environmental Policy of the Economic Commission for Europe. The Environment Programme has further strengthened its engagement in European processes relating to the environment and health, which has enabled it to receive input from the region for the second and third sessions of the United Nations Environment Assembly.

6. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the Environment Programme provided substantive assistance to the Presidency of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean for its participation and report on the environmental dimension at the first meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, held in Mexico City in April 2017. The Environment Programme participated in the Forum as part of the United Nations Development Group for Latin America and the Caribbean. The Environment Programme, together with the Presidency and Bureau of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, will organize an intersessional meeting and a regional consultation meeting in Bogota from 11 to 13 October 2017 in preparation for the third session of the United Nations Environment Assembly. The Environment Programme has also been working closely with relevant subregional ministerial forums, including one organized by the Central American

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Commission on Environment and Development and another organized by the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR).

7. The Environment Programme provided technical support for the twenty-eighth session of the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment and the Joint Committee on Environment and Development in the Arab Region, held in Cairo from 3 to 8 December 2016. The Environment Programme coordinates with the secretariat of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf to ensure that emerging environmental issues are well reflected in the agendas of the ministerial meetings of the Cooperation Council. The Environment Programme participates in the technical group meetings of the Council, the reports of which are submitted to the meetings of under-secretaries for further discussion and submission as recommendations to the ministerial meeting.

8. The efforts outlined above correspond to indicator of achievement (c) (iii) of the environmental governance subprogramme, namely “Increased the number of policies and plans from subregional and regional forums that incorporate the principles of environmental sustainability, as a result of [United Nations Environment Programme] support”. They are particularly relevant to output 3 of this indicator, namely “Support provided for effective policy exchange and to political dialogues on environment and development issues through regional and subregional ministerial and other intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder forums and mechanisms”.

### **III. Recommendations and suggested action**

9. Regional forums of ministers of the environment and environment authorities play a key role in building regional consensus on environmental issues and will continue to play an important role in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

10. Through the provision of technical support and secretariat services and its convening mandate, the Environment Programme has catalysed the efforts of regional forums of ministers of the environment and environment authorities. Efforts to further support and strengthen those forums should be sustained.