

1989/25. Transnational corporations and environmental protection in developing countries

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling General Assembly resolutions 42/186 of 11 December 1987 on the Environmental Perspective to the Year 2000 and Beyond, 42/187 of 11 December 1987 on the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development and 43/196 of 20 December 1988 on a United Nations conference on environment and development.

Aware that large industrial enterprises, including transnational corporations, are frequently the repositories of scarce technical skills for the preservation of the environment, and conduct activities in sectors that have an impact on the environment and, to that extent, have a specific responsibility,

Recognizing the role that the United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations can play in analysing the activities and strategies of transnational corporations in the context of environmental protection and preservation,

Expressing concern that pollution-intensive processes which disrupt the ecological balance and use technology that poses a high risk for the environment have been transferred to developing countries through the operations of transnational corporations.

Expressing concern about the illegal traffic in and dumping of toxic and other hazardous wastes and products in many countries, particularly developing countries,

Noting with satisfaction the recent adoption of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal,⁴¹

Emphasizing the need for all transnational corporations to develop further technologies that are not pollution-intensive or environmentally hazardous and to apply them wherever they operate,

Aware of the co-ordinating role of the United Nations Environment Programme in the field of the environment,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on transnational corporations and issues relating to the environment;⁴²

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in consultation with leading experts in this field, transnational corporations and appropriate international organizations, to conduct an analytical study of the main sectors of activity that have adverse effects on environmental preservation and the factors that determine the allocation of activities between developed and developing countries;

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in view of the specific responsibilities in this field of large industrial enterprises, including transnational corporations, to continue to develop ways and means of strengthening the participation of those enterprises in efforts to preserve and protect the environment, including, in particular, the elaboration of a set of criteria and operational principles;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to gather data on existing sources of information on technologies that are environmentally hazardous and on the availability of alternative technologies, and to make recommendations on ways and means of increasing and facilitating the effective transfer of alternative technologies to developing countries;

5. *Requests* the Secretary-General to identify ways in which developing countries in particular might benefit from the experience of other countries in their efforts to protect the environment in relation to the activities of industrial enterprises, including transnational corporations;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in consultation with Governments and other interested parties, to examine, within the context of overall efforts for the preservation of the environment, in particular for strengthening the role of transnational corporations, the feasibility of establishing a fund financed by voluntary contributions from transnational corporations and devoted to supporting the efforts of developing countries to protect the environment;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission on Transnational Corporations at its sixteenth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution.

*15th plenary meeting
24 May 1989*

⁴¹E/C.10/1989/4.

⁴²E/C.10/1989/5.

⁴³See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council 1989, Supplement No. 10 (E/1989/28/Rev.1), chap. IV*

⁴⁴See UNEP/IG.80/3

⁴⁵E/C.10/1989/12