

## 2/21 Sand and dust storms

*The United Nations Environment Assembly,*

*Recalling* General Assembly resolution 70/195 on combating sand and dust storms, which recognizes that dust and sand storms, and the unsustainable land management practices, among other factors, that can cause or exacerbate these phenomena, pose a great challenge to the sustainable development of affected countries and regions, and which also recognizes that in the past few years dust and sand storms have inflicted substantial socioeconomic damage on the inhabitants of the world's arid, semi-arid and dry subhumid areas, especially in Africa and Asia;

*Further recalling* the United Nations Environment Assembly 1/7 resolution on strengthening the role of the United Nations Environment Programme in promoting air quality;

*Also recalling* the landmark resolution on air quality and health adopted by the World Health Assembly on 26 May 2015 that highlighted that exposure to particulate matter posed a considerable health threat and was the leading environmental risk factor globally and regionally for non-communicable diseases and premature deaths;

*Taking note* of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific resolution at its seventy second session on 15 to 19 May 2016 to initiate regional cooperation to combat sand and dust storms in Asia and the Pacific;

*Acknowledging* the efforts of the United Nations Environment Programme to meet the request to the Secretary General in General Assembly resolution 70/195 to prepare in collaboration with other relevant United Nations entities, including the World Meteorological Organization and the Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, a report entitled "Global assessment of sand and dust storms" to be circulated to the General Assembly at its seventy first session;

*Taking note* of the World Meteorological Organization Sand and Dust Storm Warning and Assessment System programme which is comprised of more than fifteen organizations in different geographic regions including two regional nodes for Northern Africa-Middle East-Europe in Spain and for Asia in the People's Republic of China;

1. *Requests* the Executive Director to, within the Programme of Work and available resources, support member States, in collaboration with relevant United Nations entities and other partners, address the challenges of sand and dust storms through identification of relevant data and information gaps, policy measures and actions, building on the "Global assessment of sand and dust storms" under General Assembly resolution 70/195, and linked with the ongoing efforts on air quality monitoring and assessment in response to United Nations Environment Assembly 1/7 resolution;
  2. *Requests* the Executive Director to engage with all relevant United Nations entities to promote a coordinated approach to combatting sand and dust storms globally
  3. *Invites* member States to intensify monitoring, data collection, and knowledge sharing on all relevant aspects of sand and dust storms, including their impact on ecosystems and human health and well-being, to explore opportunities for cooperation, including North-South, South-South and South-North, and to support the exchange of knowledge and best practices in addressing the problem through practical interventions at the policy, institutional and technical levels, as appropriate;
  4. *Further invites* member States, regional development banks and others in a position to do so to contribute financial resources towards regional initiatives and projects to address the challenge of sand and dust storms;
  5. *Requests* the Executive Director to report on progress in the implementation of the present resolution to the United Nations Environment Assembly.
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