

# Index to Agenda 21

This sub-section is provided to serve as a guide to the full United Nations text of Agenda 21. It contains all the chapter titles and sub-headings with their relevant paragraph numbers. It is supplied in order to provide a link between the abridged text in *Earth Summit '92* and the full UN documentation. The official United Nations text of Agenda 21 notates each paragraph according to its chapter heading number i.e. Chapter 1 paragraphs 1.1-1.7.

## Background

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Agenda 21 is a complex document which has been some two years in development and production. The chapter headings can suggest that subjects are dealt with specifically according to subject heading. However, most chapters overlap and many issues are reinforced by repetition and elaboration throughout the document. It bears stressing that chapters on specific issues are complemented by other chapters relating to the subjects.

It is worth looking at the process involved in creating and developing Agenda 21 to fully understand and appreciate the time and effort put in by the many people, organisations, bodies and governments involved in creating the document.

In December 1989 the United Nations formally resolved to convene a United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) and agreed the terms and aims of UNCED in an enabling resolution, no 44/228. A Preparatory Committee (Prepcom) of States' members of the United Nations and the members of specialized agencies was set up, responsible for coordinating all of the work leading to the conference, particularly the input from the UN system, governments and Non-Governmental Organisations. A secretariat was set up in Geneva and Maurice Strong was appointed as Secretary-General to the Conference. Over the next two years four Prepcoms were held.

## Prepcom I, August 1990, Nairobi

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The Secretariat was requested to produce reports to help define the action programmes on the many UNCED issues. Two working groups were established: Working Group I covered protection of the atmosphere (climate change, ozone depletion, transboundary air pollution), land resources (deforestation, desertification and drought), biodiversity and biotechnology. Working Group II covered oceans, seas and coastal areas, freshwater and hazardous and toxic wastes. In addition every country was asked to produce a comprehensive national environment and development report.

It was at this Prepcom that Maurice Strong outlined the broad ideals of UNCED and emphasised the hope that Agenda 21 would prove to have a stronger influence than the normal UN Action Plans and that new mechanisms would result to encourage, if not force, governments into action.

## Prepcom II, March 1991, Geneva

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After reviewing the Secretariat's reports, discussions at this Prepcom began to focus on the actions needed to address the issues and problems. A third Working Group was established to focus on legal and institutional matters. It was decided that the Prepcom would examine the issues involved and the options available on a convention on forests, but any agreement on such a convention would have to be taken at the conference.

Maurice Strong's ideas for Agenda 21 were more clearly articulated at this Prepcom. He envisaged a programme of action for the implementation of the principles enunciated in the Earth Charter with clearly articulated objectives, goals, targets, strategies and action programmes, costing and allocation of institutional roles. He wanted a clear and simple mechanism of targets, schedules and money. This was not easy to achieve given the attempt to provide both a framework for the many issues together with a framework for action incorporating the various UN bodies, NGOs and governments involved.

## Prepcom III, August 1991, Geneva

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The composition of Agenda 21 began to emerge. It was to set global goals on the issues involved, define the direction which actions would take, determine priorities and evaluate progress. Targets to achieve the goals would be set. Draft texts were presented at this Prepcom indicating the final form of Agenda 21.

## Prepcom IV, March 1992, New York

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This was the final Prepcom and focused largely on negotiation of texts of which 90 per cent were agreed. This left some of the most contentious subjects of finance, technology transfer, climate and biodiversity, institutional questions, poverty, consumption, high seas fisheries, biotechnology and safety to be discussed and agreed at Rio. The draft Rio Declaration on Environment and Development was agreed at this Prepcom.

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