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**United Nations Environment Assembly of the
United Nations Environment Programme**

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Item 6 of the provisional agenda*

**Programme of work and budget, and other
administrative and budgetary issues**

**Progress in the implementation of resolution 3/6 on managing
soil pollution to achieve sustainable development**

Report of the Executive Director

Summary

In its resolution 3/6,¹ on managing soil pollution to achieve sustainable development, the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), among other things, requested member States and invited relevant United Nations organizations to address soil pollution within the global environmental, food security and agriculture, development and health agendas in an integrated manner, especially through preventive approaches and risk management using available science. It also requested the Executive Director of UNEP to report to the United Nations Environment Assembly at its fourth session on progress in implementing the resolution.

The present report focuses on progress achieved in the implementation of the resolution, in particular paragraph 7, in which the Environment Assembly requested the Executive Director, by the fifth session of the Assembly and subject to the availability of resources, to invite, within their respective mandates, relevant United Nations organizations, including the World Health Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations, the Global Soil Partnership and its Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, among other things, to prepare a report, based on available scientific information and data, on the extent and future trends of soil pollution, considering both point source contamination and diffuse pollution; and on the risks and impacts of soil pollution on health, the environment and food security, including land degradation and the burden of disease resulting from exposure to contaminated soil.

* UNEP/EA.4/1/Rev.1.

¹ UNEP/EA.3/Res.6.

I. Progress in the implementation of resolution 3/6

1. The Global Symposium on Soil Pollution, organized jointly by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO), was held at the headquarters of FAO, in Rome, in May 2018. A side event on Environment Assembly resolution 3/6 was convened by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on the margins of the meeting to present a proposal for the way forward in relation to paragraphs 4–9 of the resolution. During the symposium, the Global Soil Partnership’s Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils launched a report entitled *Soil Pollution: A Hidden Reality*, which provides a comprehensive summary of the state of soil pollution and identifies the main pollutants and their sources affecting human health and the environment. The Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils will remain engaged in the process of responding to resolution 3/6 and will play a core role in terms of technical and scientific contributions, with UNEP facilitating a bridge between those contributions and policy reform and mainstreaming together with Governments and collaborating agencies.
2. A consultation workshop to advance the implementation of resolution 3/6, held in Paris in June 2018, provided an opportunity for stakeholder input and engagement to shape the implementation plan and identify and prioritize responses, in particular to paragraphs 4, 6 and 8. The response to resolution 3/4 on environment and health, which is being led by the Economy Division, overlaps with resolution 3/6, notably in terms of the impact of pesticides and fertilizers on human health, a report on which is being developed as part of the response to resolution 3/4. A specific proposal has been articulated with regard to joint planning to harmonize the outputs in terms of the two resolutions.
3. In that regard, a UNEP/FAO planning meeting was held on 12 October 2018 to bring together subject-area experts with the aim of providing greater clarity on joint work in response to the two resolutions.
4. A draft implementation plan and budget has since been prepared and shared with the Ecosystem Division to facilitate resource mobilization. The plan and budget are being incorporated into a joint UNEP/FAO mobilization strategy proposal for the implementation of the resolutions. The Government of France has provided €30,000 towards the implementation of resolution 3/6.

II. Recommendations and suggested action

5. The implementation of the provisions of resolution 3/6 will require resource mobilization efforts to complement the generous contribution provided by the Government of France. The Environment Assembly may wish to consider supporting ongoing resource mobilization efforts.
6. The report entitled *Soil Pollution: A Hidden Reality* should be incorporated into the outputs responding to resolution 3/6 given its comprehensive coverage of many relevant aspects. Certain areas that are not addressed in the report will require further work, in collaboration with partners, in accordance with the provisions of the resolution.
7. UNEP is the implementing agency for the project “Towards an International Nitrogen Management System”, funded by the Global Environment Facility. The project anticipates the delivery of a global nitrogen assessment by 2021 that will focus on the impacts of forms of reactive nitrogen in the environment, including within soils. The assessment is to begin in 2019 and will complement, and provide input to, the reporting outputs in response to resolution 3/6.