



CSD INTERSESSIONAL WORKING GROUP MONDAY, 1 MARCH 1999

Delegates at the *Ad Hoc* Intersessional Working Group (ISWG) on Oceans and Seas and the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) met in the afternoon to elect the Co-Chairs, adopt the agenda, hear reports from relevant intersessional meetings and conduct general discussion on oceans and seas.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

Delegates elected John Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda) and Alan Simcock (UK) as Co-Chairs and adopted the agenda (E/CN.17/ISWG.II/1999/1). Co-Chair Simcock explained that the Co-Chairs would prepare a summary of discussion to be included in the CSD's report as reference material and would also identify elements for a draft decision as a basis for negotiations at CSD-7. The ISWG will also prepare a first draft text for CSD-7 in preparation for the UN General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) to conduct a comprehensive review of implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS.

OPENING STATEMENTS

UNEP presented its Governing Council Decision 20/19 on contributions to CSD-7, which addresses oceans and seas, the Global Programme of Action for Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities (GPA) and SIDS. He drew attention to several proposals, including a call for CSD-7 to promote enhanced coordination and improved institutional arrangements within the UN system on marine-related activities, especially through the work of the ACC Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas.

JoAnne DiSano, Director of the UN Division for Sustainable Development, introduced the Report of the Secretary-General on Oceans and Seas (E/CN.17/1999/4). She highlighted: increased poverty in coastal areas due to increasing pressure on limited resources; recognition of the need for integrated coastal area management; and the need for urgent corrective action to ensure the sustainable use of all fish stocks.

Dr. Rudolf Sloof, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, reported on the First International Seminar on the 1997-98 El Niño held in November 1998, highlighting the need for improvements in prediction technology, an increased network of observation stations and continued efforts to increase cooperation.

SOUTH AFRICA reported on the Cape Town Conference on development and protection of African coastal and marine environments (3-4 December 1998). The conference evaluated coastal and marine environments, national policies, financial resources, relevant multilateral programmes and arrangements, and strengthening cooperation. BRAZIL and the UK reported on the Second London Oceans Workshop (10-12 December 1998), which discussed developing an integrated approach to oceans management, identified overfishing and pollution from land-based activities as major problems, and called for targets and indicators to reduce overfishing. AUSTRALIA noted that the International Tropical Marine Ecosystems Management Symposium in Townsville, Australia (23-26 November 1998), *inter alia*, reviewed implementation of the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI), identified its shortcomings and reaffirmed the importance of reefs to ecosystems. The NETHERLANDS drew attention to an international expert meeting on environmental practices in offshore oil and gas activities held in November 1997.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

GUYANA, on behalf of the G-77/CHINA, said the Secretary-General's report was fairly comprehensive, although repeated references to problems of overfishing and excess fishing capacity failed to differentiate the relative roles and responsibilities of industrialized and developing countries. She noted that overfishing is a crisis caused primarily by industrialized fleets. GERMANY, on behalf of the EU, indicated that ubiquitous threats to oceans and seas have consequences for global security and biodiversity. He called for concrete actions in national and regional contexts, including halting degradation of the marine environment from land-based activities, shipping and offshore installations. He said CSD-7's review should incorporate UNCLOS implementation, UNGASS outcomes, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the GPA.

The Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) said the lack of an integrated approach had limited the effectiveness of efforts to address pollution and over-exploitation of resources. He called for: regional initiatives; implementation of the Straddling Fishstocks and Highly Migratory Fishstocks Agreement (hereafter Fishstocks Agreement); action on coral reefs; a central role for the UN General Assembly (GA) in effective coordination and enhanced measures for debating oceans and UNCLOS. ICELAND called for the establishment of an Intergovernmental Panel on Marine Pollution, removal of subsidies and other trade distorting and restricting measures, and the introduction of market incentives such as eco-labelling.

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AUSTRALIA proposed that CSD-7: call on the CBD to accelerate a global representative system of marine protected areas (MPAs) within and across jurisdictions; provide guidance to the GEF on IUCN and World Bank work on MPAs and recognize the urgency of adopting and implementing the ICRI Framework for Action. He also addressed: improved coordination of multilateral bodies and legal mechanisms to identify suitable protection areas; partnerships among UN agencies; endorsement of the ICRI; implementation of the GPA; and prevention of illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing.

MALTA proposed the establishment of a Committee of the Whole (COW) to regularly address oceans in a comprehensive and integrated manner. Such a COW would include: universal participation by UN member States; direct reporting to the GA; participation of relevant UN bodies and civil society; and meeting on a biennial basis outside the annual GA session. NEW ZEALAND called on the CSD to urge implementation of the Fishstocks Agreement and the GPA. He underscored the need for coordination, practical steps at the regional level, good science and global leadership. PAPUA NEW GUINEA noted social and economic pressures resulting from marine and coastal degradation. He supported regional cooperation on integrated coastal management. He noted that bans on driftnet fishing have produced limited results and called for the political will to make necessary adjustments.

MEXICO, on behalf of the RIO GROUP, underscored institutional coordination on oceans management and stressed that El Niño should be included in CSD-7's work programme. TURKEY stressed the importance of regional initiatives. The US identified marine protection from land-based activities, sustainable fisheries and intergovernmental overview and coordination of oceans as critical issues, and supported the creation of an open-ended working group of the GA to improve intergovernmental cooperation and coordination on oceans issues.

The REPUBLIC OF KOREA indicated that marine protection requires a holistic approach that integrates political, economic, scientific, legal and institutional measures. CANADA highlighted progress toward sustainable oceans management through a range of complementary initiatives facilitated by Canada's Ocean Act. She encouraged other countries to adopt domestic oceans legislation and supported international fisheries instruments. INDIA expressed hope that the Fishstocks Agreement would guarantee the rights of developing country coastal States and lead to technical and financial support for fisheries development in developing countries. She highlighted national responsibility to implement marine pollution prevention agreements and regional cooperation to enforce compliance. She supported enhanced global coordination but cautioned against proliferation of fora.

NORWAY called for further investigation and identification of the problems to be addressed before discussing new arenas on oceans. He stressed the need to renew, revitalize and improve existing bodies, particularly UNEP's Regional Seas Programme. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION highlighted national efforts to implement international and regional oceans agreements. He said CSD-7's task should be to identify priority areas and consider action-oriented solutions within the UN system. He supported enhanced coordination of various UN ocean-related organizations and recommended weighing the pros and cons of proposals for new mechanisms. CHINA said each State has sovereignty to protect its marine territory and no State has the right to pollute the marine territory of another. He noted that unresolved financial resource issues hinder implementation of the GPA. He called on developed countries to take greater responsibility to protect the marine environment, control pollution and provide new and additional resources and transfer technologies on favorable terms.

JAPAN stressed the importance of regional cooperation and implementation of the UNEP Regional Seas Programme. He underscored the need to address excessive fishing capacity and recommended defining the principle of sustainable use prior to establishing MPAs. He highlighted preparations to establish a reef monitoring center and the initiation of an oceanographic observation center. SOUTH AFRICA supported efforts to reduce the world's fishing fleet and noted illegal, unreported, unregulated fishing by vessels flying flags of convenience. The SOLOMON ISLANDS stressed the importance of living marine resources as a source of food, livelihood and national income. He underscored regional collaboration, intergovernmental coordination and implementation of existing agreements. ECUADOR said the First International Seminar on El Niño would contribute to long-term prevention and mitigation strategies and called for the inclusion of an agenda item on El Niño. The PHILIPPINES expressed support for universal ratification of UNCLOS, a role for the CSD, reduction and elimination of wasteful fishing practices and poverty eradication. FIJI supported the Secretary-General's report and called for leadership from the GA.

BRAZIL highlighted domestic action on oceans, including an inter-ministerial council for the marine environment and a programme on integrated coastal management. Regarding coordination of actions and initiatives, he suggested discussing a coordinating mechanism at a meeting other than the CSD. JAMAICA called for a comprehensive, multidimensional approach to the effective management of marine and coastal resources. UNESCO said sustainable development of oceans will only be possible if actions are based on scientific understanding and reinforced by international cooperation and agreements. He called on the meeting to support the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS).

The NGO CAUCUS ON OCEANS said a more effective forum for ocean-related actions should be agreed upon during CSD-7. This could take the form of an intergovernmental forum, task force or standing committee that would report to the CSD, ECOSOC and the GA and allow for maximum NGO participation. WWF and IUCN called on governments and UN agencies to intensify efforts to protect oceans and manage marine resources sustainably through measures to achieve sustainable fisheries, a global network of MPAs and programmes to address marine pollution. The INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION (IMO) noted progress in preventing pollution from ships and offshore oil activities and protecting special areas.

IN THE CORRIDORS

In the absence of specific project funding promises at a prospective SIDS donors' conference in New York last week, participants reported that the anticipated "pledging" meeting became an opportunity to review regional activities in what was reported to be a constructive and "good atmosphere." Offers of continued support were well received and at least one donor group has already responded positively to a draft resolution prepared by SIDS for submission to the UNGASS.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

ADDRESS BY CSD-7 CHAIR SIMON UPTON: CSD-7 Chair Simon Upton (New Zealand) will address the ISWG at the morning session. After presentations the session may adjourn to allow further G-77/China consultations. In the afternoon, AOSIS will make a presentation, which will be followed by general discussion on SIDS.

DISCUSSION SUMMARY: The Co-Chairs' draft summary of Monday's discussion on oceans and seas will be circulated.