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CSD INTERSESSIONAL WORKING GROUP TUESDAY, 4 MARCH 1997

Delegates to the CSD Intersessional Working Group began their consideration of the Co-Chairs' draft of the proposed UNGASS outcome during the morning. A number of delegations proposed alternative structures for the text. Regional and interest groups conducted informal consultations during the afternoon to consolidate these proposals.

DISCUSSION OF THE CO-CHAIRS' DRAFT TEXT

Co-Chair Amorim introduced discussion on the Co-Chairs' draft "Proposed Outcome of the UNGA Special Session" and reminded delegations that the discussion should not be a full negotiation.

The G-77/CHINA said he would await input from capitals before giving final agreement. Among the improvements he called for to bring the document into line with the interests of developing countries were: equal treatment of all the components of sustainable development, notably economic development and growth, as these were recognized in Rio as the engine of environmental protection; and adequate reference to common but differentiated responsibilities. On Areas Requiring Urgent Action, he proposed including references to mobilization of new and additional resources and the transfer of environmentally sound technologies (ESTs). He called for elaboration on the references to desertification and drought. He said the Co-Chairs' draft presents general principles but does not clearly define how these are to be implemented. He suggested that the final document follow the structure of Agenda 21.

The EU welcomed the document's structure and called for stronger and more appealing language in the opening Statement of Commitment. He said the draft would benefit from high-level input at CSD-5. On Strategies for Implementation, he said eradication of poverty and changing production and consumption patterns should be over-arching objectives requiring urgent action. On Areas Requiring Urgent Action, he called for a clearer distinction between emerging issues on which progress can be made by the CSD and UNGASS and those being handled by other processes. He suggested that the text identify the level and body responsible for action in order to orient it towards operationalization. He noted that there is little mention of the situation and needs of countries with economies in transition. He proposed adding references to good governance and human rights to text calling for national action.

BELARUS said the text does not reflect the problems of countries with economies in transition and notified delegates that it will host a regional conference on sustainable development to take place from 16-18 April 1997. MEXICO said each new area for action must be accompanied by specific commitments, and called for identification of actors responsible for implementation. He also supported, *inter alia*: quantifiable goals that recognize the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities; an intergovernmental group on freshwater; and a reference to the FAO code of conduct for fishing in the text on oceans. Co-Chair Amorim noted that many delegates believed international cooperation was not adequately stressed in the draft, but said a main preoccupation of the Co-Chairs had been for this concept to appear throughout the document. KAZAKSTAN proposed: establishing an international scientific centre for sustainable development; transferring military technology for environmental purposes; using high technology information; and restoring stability to areas affected by natural disasters.

ICELAND said the Statement of Commitment should be examined at CSD-5. The final declaration should be concise and, where possible, set dates and targets. He proposed changing the heading "Policy Approaches" to "Priority Policy Approaches," as these issues require urgent action as well. The importance of public awareness of sustainable development should be included in the section on integration of economic, social and environmental objectives. Poverty should be addressed under policy approaches with other cross-sectoral issues.

CANADA said the document should be more of a leaders' statement, more authoritative and action-oriented. The Assessment of Progress Reached After Rio should include references to the outcomes of the major UN conferences since Rio. She proposed re-orienting the three sections under Strategies for Implementation to include: issues being addressed in other fora but which require political attention, such as climate, desertification and biodiversity; sectoral issues that require urgent action but are not currently being tackled by any specific forum, such as forests, freshwater, oceans and energy; and issues requiring comprehensive approaches to implementation, such as poverty, financial resources, technology transfer and major groups. She proposed adding a subparagraph on ensuring that international trade rules support sustainable development. Regarding text on positive measures to make trade, environment and sustainable development mutually supporting, she said the use of the General System of Preferences may not be most effective way to encourage sustainable production.

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COLOMBIA noted that the need for urgent action should be emphasized not only in the sectoral areas but also in Policy Approaches and Means of Implementation. He recommended transferring the issues of poverty, population, health and sustainable human settlements into the section on policy approaches and adding a subparagraph on foreign debt. Under Areas Requiring Urgent Action, he proposed that energy and transportation be addressed in distinct sections. He proposed moving the section on education to Means of Implementation and adding a section on international legal instruments. He recommended taking into account the sequence of Agenda 21 when structuring the document.

NORWAY suggested that the Working Group establish a consensus on the structure of the document and the CSD's priorities over the next five years. The document should engage those at UNGASS, including the Norwegian Prime Minister and other Cabinet members. Specifically, he proposed that: poverty eradication and governance issues be given the status of Policy Approaches; trade be included as a Means of Implementation; the document cluster items on follow-up to global conferences, on-going processes under UN conventions, and other urgent areas identified by the Co-Chairs. He also called for a clearer indication of what strategies call for in terms of action, advice, information-seeking and direction.

NIGERIA said delegations were in disarray regarding the discussion on the document's structure. He called for a clear delineation of cross-sectoral and sectoral issues and improved treatment of external debt. CUBA said the document over-emphasizes the role of domestic policies in attracting private financial flows and subordinates the role of ODA to helping those who fail to attract FDI. He underlined the importance of international cooperation in facilitating technology transfer and capacity-building as means of attracting investment. He noted the role of the market economy in creating poverty.

The RUSSIAN FEDERATION said the emphasis on environmental protection should be strengthened and the problems of countries with economies in transition should be included. He proposed identifying only five or six areas for urgent action, and included forests, water, transport and energy among these areas. SWITZERLAND called for: stronger commitments and action-oriented recommendations; poverty eradication to be the over-arching issue guiding other policies; a clearer distinction between areas requiring priority attention and those already addressed by other international processes; and the identification of measurable targets. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA suggested that the Statement of Commitment section highlight long-term objectives and that a catch-phrase, such as "Sustainability for all by 2005," be adopted.

IRAN recommended: separating desertification and drought from land and sustainable agriculture; adding natural disaster reduction to the sectoral issues; and separating transport from energy. He highlighted the need to reiterate political will, partnership and international cooperation and to emphasize that the Rio principles remain valid, particularly that of common but differentiated responsibilities. In the sections on consumption and production patterns and energy and transport, the developmental needs of developing countries should be elaborated. ARGENTINA emphasized that the concept of sustainable development should be explicitly clarified and reflected under Policy Approaches.

NEW ZEALAND suggested that some paragraphs under Areas Requiring Urgent Action could be merged. He did not support the proposal to replicate the structure of Agenda 21. He said the

Statement of Commitment should be strengthened and reiterate a clear commitment to Agenda 21 and all Rio principles. The document should be more action-oriented and decisive and clearly call for strengthening the CSD and UNEP. He said UNGASS should take decisions rather than simply make recommendations to ECOSOC. He stressed the importance of addressing the overlap among various bodies dealing with sustainable development and the need for coordination among them, particularly in the use of national reports.

AUSTRALIA supported: distinguishing between areas of action being undertaken by other fora and those by the CSD; enhancing national strategies by reporting achievements; in the context of changing consumption and production patterns, recommending the internalization of costs in natural resource pricing, including water; and using a sectoral approach incorporating references to best practices and indicators. He supported delineation of those bodies responsible for implementation. The PHILIPPINES, supported by VENEZUELA, called for a consensus approach to sustainable development based on the definition agreed at the World Summit for Social Development (WSSD) (economic and social development and environmental protection) and for an in-depth assessment of the current situation to enable more effective decision-making for future implementation of Agenda 21. She called for an integrated approach to sectoral and cross-sectoral issues. On Means of Implementation, she suggested expanding education to incorporate public information, communications and advocacy.

The UKRAINE supported the suggestion that the document be more action-oriented and called for more emphasis on countries with economies in transition. He suggested a better balance in the section on Areas Requiring Urgent Action, stating that some subparagraphs, such as oceans, are too detailed while others, such as toxic chemicals and wastes and land and sustainable agriculture, are too short.

Co-Chair Amorim announced that it would not be possible to produce a revised draft by the end of the week. He invited those groups of countries with similar proposals on the document structure to combine their ideas and put forward a number of optional structures to form an appendix.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Maurice Strong, the Executive Coordinator for Reform at the UN, was briefed by Working Group Co-Chair Derek Osborn on proceedings at the Intersessional and any implications for the UN reform process. Mr. Strong is reported to have shown particular interest in two areas of agreement reached by delegations. The first was the view that UNEP is an essential part of the UN system in its role as monitor of global environmental information and catalyst of agreements, and that many delegations expressed their wish to see the agency strengthened and that it overcome current governance and financial difficulties. The second issue discussed was the need for the CSD to avoid duplicating UNEP's work and to direct more attention to the wider sustainable development agenda, placing less emphasis on purely environmental issues.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

WORKING GROUP: The Working Group is expected to meet during the morning and afternoon in Conference Room 4. The sections on Policy Approaches and Means of Implementation are expected to be taken up first.