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CSD-5 HIGHLIGHTS WEDNESDAY, 9 APRIL 1997

Delegates to CSD-5 heard over fifty statements from ministers, ambassadors and NGOs. The President of the UN General Assembly, Razali Ismail (Malaysia), also addressed the meeting. Delegates elected Vice-Chairs Czeslaw Wieckowski (Poland) for the Eastern European Group and Bagher Asadi (Iran) for the Asian Group.

UNGA President Razali said the poor must be the primary beneficiaries of UNGASS. He called for an analysis of cross-sectoral issues on a par with that of sectoral issues. He said the CSD should: place poverty eradication at the center of debates; address unsustainable production and consumption patterns; respect the rights and needs of indigenous people; go beyond the current debate over ODA and FDI; and examine the role of international financial institutions. He also recommended: setting frameworks to examine the speculative nature of capital flows; analyzing the impact of deregulation; and addressing developments in the WTO.

HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT

Delegates continued to offer their views on the proposed outcome of the session. CANADA stressed the need to "move from Rio to reality" and called for achievable milestones, improved mechanisms to share experiences, and the streamlining and improvement of international institutions. COSTA RICA called for action to implement existing commitments. THAILAND said UNGASS should provide new political impetus for implementation after a critical examination of national efforts. ITALY said that sustainable development remains a principle whose degree of application in policy development and implementation at the national and regional levels has been inadequate.

MALAYSIA proposed defining sustainable development in terms of economic and social development, environmental protection and equity. NORWAY recommended that the political declaration reflect the importance of peace, security, democracy and respect for human rights as preconditions for sustainable development. SOUTH AFRICA said his country's advances reflect the historical lessons that inequality and tyranny are unsustainable. SWITZERLAND said sustainable development depends on poverty eradication and integration of environmental protection into all sectors. IRELAND said that poverty eradication and meeting basic food and shelter needs must continue to be the major focus of the Rio follow-up.

The RUSSIAN FEDERATION said the level of international coordination on sustainable development does not match the magnitude of the current critical situation.

MEXICO underscored the need to identify priorities and specific measures and to recognize common but differentiated responsibilities in environmental conventions. The PHILIPPINES stressed effective information, education and communication programmes. LITHUANIA emphasized collaboration at bilateral and regional levels. SLOVAKIA recommended strengthening the CSD so that it may target its efforts. The CZECH REPUBLIC underlined the importance of indicators and economic instruments for sustainable development. NICARAGUA called for training to assist with national reporting commitments.

ALGERIA and MALAYSIA proposed a fund for facilitating technology transfer. IRAN said the CSD should focus on technology transfer, technical assistance and changing consumption and production patterns. BENIN highlighted the Francophone countries' priorities: freshwater; energy; desertification; and sustainable forest development. TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, for the ALLIANCE OF SMALL ISLAND STATES (AOSIS), stated that the priority issues should be energy, oceans and sustainable tourism and, with GUYANA, called on the international community to actively support the Barbados Programme of Action for Small Island Developing States.

SPAIN and ALGERIA emphasized the importance of addressing desertification. EGYPT called for support for the Global Mechanism to ensure implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification. The INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES said the CSD should establish a target for the spread of local Agenda 21s. The INDIGENOUS PEOPLES CAUCUS called on the CSD to adopt the draft declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples. CHILE recommended strengthening the draft language on toxic waste. The ZANZIBAR ASSOCIATION FOR PROGRESS stressed the need for expanded participation in all decision-making fora and for consistency between representations at the UN and in capitals.

MALAYSIA proposed adding globalization as a cross-cutting issue for annual CSD consideration. PANAMA called for consideration of globalization in any CSD examination of progress in implementing Agenda 21. SLOVENIA said globalization suggested a need for differentiated regional approaches to implementation.

NORWAY said social and environmental concerns must be taken into account by the global trading system, and liberalization should not be allowed to weaken environmental standards and

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agreements. SWITZERLAND proposed bringing international actors on trade and environment together on an equal level. EGYPT noted developing countries' concern that environmental protection not be used as a guise for protectionism. CUBA said there would be no equity in sustainable development if countries focus only on privatization and pursuit of the perfect market.

Several speakers called for a reversal of declining ODA flows and for a renewed commitment to the ODA target of 0.7% of GNP. GABON and INDONESIA noted that ODA is the only source of external financing for many countries and sustainable development is impossible in its absence. INDONESIA stressed that FDI is not a viable alternative to ODA. FINLAND stated that ODA should be channeled to the poorest countries and used to improve the enabling environment for private sector operations. SPAIN said UNGASS should adopt specific commitments on: increased donor country efforts; improved developing country efficiency; improved quality of ODA; increased contributions from transnational corporations; and international trade reform.

CHINA said some developed countries unilaterally call on developing countries to undertake obligations beyond their level of development, disregarding the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. NAMIBIA called for an international environment that will reinforce national efforts in developing countries. NICARAGUA called for a flexible approach to debt relief to assist heavily indebted countries in implementing sustainable development. BRAZIL suggested that developed countries use incentives to ensure enhanced commitment of international private capital flows to sustainable development. The WORLD BANK highlighted the need for changes in the pattern and efficiency of financing and market transformation through partnerships. NORWAY recommended that proposals for an international tax on aviation fuel and for an international panel on finance be considered at UNGASS.

A number of speakers, including NORWAY, GABON and SWITZERLAND, called for strengthening UNEP. THAILAND called on Member States to provide the necessary financial support for UNEP and supported a strengthened CSD role in international environmental issues. MEXICO emphasized the distinction between the mandates of UNEP and the CSD and the importance of cooperation between them. NEW ZEALAND expressed concern that discussions on global environmental issues would be relegated to UNEP. Several delegations stressed the importance of GEF replenishment, including EGYPT, FINLAND, PANAMA and AOSIS.

NORWAY emphasized the need to explore eco-efficiency and said business should be encouraged to adopt codes of conduct and management systems for promoting sustainable development. SLOVENIA called for the internalization of environmental costs of production at the international level. AUSTRALIA called for increased use of economic instruments to internalize environmental costs, improve efficiency and modify consumer behavior. LUXEMBOURG stressed that industrialized countries must reexamine unsustainable production and consumption patterns and developing countries must accept that they cannot reproduce this unsustainable model of economic growth.

NORWAY and ICELAND called for increased use of renewable energy sources. AUSTRIA recommended setting and monitoring goals to improve energy and material efficiency, supported the development of a strategy for a sustainable energy future, and stressed the need for intergovernmental work on this issue. SWITZERLAND and DENMARK proposed an intergovernmental panel on energy. The WORLD BANK noted the need to reform the energy sector. HUNGARY suggested that the CSD coordinate and synthesize existing energy sector initiatives and programmes within the UN. The NGO ENERGY CAUCUS called for the elimination

of fossil fuel subsidies and increased programmes for energy efficiency.

AOSIS highlighted the importance of implementing early and substantial reductions in GHG emissions. AUSTRIA appealed to industrialized countries to commit to substantive reduction targets and timetables as soon as possible. LUXEMBOURG said UNGASS should call on FCCC COP-3 to adopt a protocol for realistic and legally-binding reductions. ITALY recommended for COP-3: a legally-binding commitment to reduce emissions by 15% in developed countries; active involvement of developing countries; commitment by newly industrialized countries to adopt new technologies and products; and the use and dissemination of energy efficient technologies.

AUSTRIA, FINLAND, SLOVAKIA and ITALY supported an international convention on forests. INDONESIA emphasized the need for continued dialogue to implement the IPF's action proposals, but said its ultimate objective should be to seek agreement on a convention. AUSTRALIA and NEW ZEALAND said that the international debate on forests has not yielded a convincing case for a legally-binding instrument. GABON stressed the importance of implementing the Forest Principles and said proposals for a convention should be seriously studied and take into account all IPF recommendations. BRAZIL said the international debate on forests should continue under the CSD through an intergovernmental forum to assess and monitor implementation of the action proposals and elaborate possible elements of a convention or other arrangements. GREENPEACE INTERNATIONAL highlighted the importance of the IPF's action proposals and said some countries are diverting attention from them by calling for a global convention. FINLAND called for further development and national implementation of criteria and indicators on a cross-sectoral and participatory basis.

AUSTRIA underscored the urgency of access to freshwater and called on the CSD to elaborate a global plan of action. The PHILIPPINES advocated an integrated approach and recommended a multilateral fund to support efforts in water resource management, technology transfer and information exchange. SOUTH AFRICA noted huge disparities in access to clean water and sanitation in many African countries. URUGUAY and INDIA supported freshwater as a CSD priority.

ICELAND called for: prioritization of marine issues in relevant UN agencies; improvement of the scientific basis for work on oceans; and a phase-out of fishing subsidies. GREENPEACE INTERNATIONAL called for an FAO mandate for strong action on fishing over-capacity.

IN THE CORRIDORS

The US convened a meeting of the Vinci group Wednesday to discuss the outcome of the decision taken by the Governing Council on the future of UNEP. Observers described the meeting as the beginning of an exercise in mending relations between Western countries and the G-77 in the wake of the debate over UNEP's future. They reported that the first meeting of the new ministerial body to oversee UNEP's work will meet during UNGASS. It is understood that Spain became the first of those countries who suspended their contributions to UNEP to declare its intention to resume payments. The UK is reported to be waiting until the new governance structure has been tried and tested, while the US resumption, when it comes, may have strings attached.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT: The High-Level Segment will consider the report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests during morning and afternoon meetings.