



Earth Negotiations Bulletin

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A Reporting Service for Environment and Development Negotiations

Vol. 5 No. 72 Published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development Friday, 11 April 1997

CSD-5 HIGHLIGHTS THURSDAY, 10 APRIL 1997

Delegates to CSD-5 heard statements on the reports of the Intersessional Working Group and the IPF. Nitin Desai, Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, noted that statements to date reflect the concern that much attention has focused on resource management and major groups, but not social and economic dimensions and implementation. He highlighted the importance of implementation, availability of resources and new processes for technology transfer. He called for measurable indicators of progress on Agenda 21.

HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT

OUTCOME OF THE SESSION: A number of speakers discussed their preferred output from the session. GHANA said UNGASS must give serious attention to new and additional resources, global partnership, technology transfer and poverty eradication. MOZAMBIQUE stated that poverty and external debt present difficulties for implementation of the Rio agreements. MONGOLIA noted that many poor countries have had to reallocate their budgets or delay implementation of Agenda 21. The DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA called for action-oriented measures to fulfill commitments to increase ODA and transfer ESTs. MONACO said ODA and technology transfer remain fundamental implementation problems and affirmed the advantage of regional level action.

PERU noted the problem of drug trafficking. The EUROPEAN COMMISSION called for integrated approaches to: sustainable development and the trading system; rural development; implementation of fisheries agreements and marine protection; and transport. BELARUS underscored the need for measures to deal with natural and technogeneous disasters and for assistance and market access for economies in transition. ZIMBABWE called for investment and research in affordable renewable energy. MALTA recommended focusing on education, freshwater, pollution control, atmospheric protection, transfer of ESTs and issues confronting SIDS. BOLIVIA emphasized consumption patterns and promotion of eco-efficiency, the polluter pays principle and internalization of environmental costs. The MARSHALL ISLANDS called for improved coordination of international ocean-related instruments, integrated coastal zone management efforts and energy activities within the UN system. SAUDI ARABIA highlighted efforts on pollution control, environmental assessments, and combating desertification. IRAQ noted the consequences of economic sanctions.

The BAHAMAS called for implementing or coordinating mechanisms for SIDS, including electronic information resources. The WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES noted that "sustainable development" is often misused to legitimize economic approaches premised on unregulated expansion of production and consumption. The INTERNATIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE said business attitudes have evolved from pollution control to an integrated approach to environmentally-friendly products. The WOMEN'S CAUCUS called for recognition of women's work, urgent revitalization of the UN Transnational Corporation center, CSD mechanisms to guide and monitor the WTO, and targets for integrating women into the implementation of sustainable development. ECUADOR supported integrating a gender perspective into the outcome.

FORESTS: Many delegates commented on the report of the IPF. David Harcharik, FAO, said the Inter-Agency Task Force has reduced overlap, increased efficiency, built a high level of collaboration, and is developing strategic plans to implement IPF recommendations within members' respective mandates. He said a global convention must have specific objectives and a new intergovernmental forum must be focused and bear in mind existing agencies.

Several countries supported the recommendation that the CSD establish an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) to elaborate a global convention on forests. The EU said a convention could: fill gaps in existing forest-related instruments; address trade in products from all types of forests; offer a framework for improved mobilization and more effective use of resources and technology transfer; strengthen national and international policies for sustainable forest management (SFM); enhance the priority of forestry in national budgets and among the donor community; enable countries to leverage more funding from multilateral organizations; and be completed by the year 2000. CANADA said the CSD should recommend launching negotiations this year. She noted that while it is unlikely that more funds will become available, improved use of existing resources to support SFM implementation is possible, and a convention would help coordinate ODA and promote new and innovative sources of finance and technology transfer.

COSTA RICA said a convention could supplement the framework of existing global environmental agreements. MALAYSIA called for improved access to markets and downstream value-added processing and denounced restrictive and punitive actions against tropical timber trade, particularly unilateral trade bans and boycotts by sub-national authorities. He supported seeking consensus on a time-bound schedule leading to an

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equitable and comprehensive global forest convention, provided that it covers all forests and has adequate economic, technological and environmental provisions. GERMANY supported a convention that sets out general principles, guidelines, commitments and standards. She called for economic incentives for environmentally sound forest management and noted that the IPF agreed on basic principles for voluntary and market-oriented labelling and certification.

VENEZUELA supported deciding how and when a convention would be discussed, including its objectives, scope and financial mechanisms. The convention must also include all types of forests and maintain an integrated approach. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION said forests belong to the world community as a whole, and he favored a convention even if such an instrument could not work perfectly. AUSTRIA said a convention would be the most effective way to support the implementation of SFM, including financial support. INDONESIA stressed the need for an international fund to support the management, conservation and sustainable development of forests. He called for one set of rules that apply to all producers. FRANCE supported a legally-binding instrument that establishes general principles and takes into account the long-range functions of forests.

NORWAY said if broad consensus emerges, he would support establishing an INC on a legally-binding instrument on all types of forests with a focused and time-limited mandate. The PHILIPPINES stated that before rushing into convention negotiations, its contents must be carefully examined. A possible convention must: include all types of forests; reflect varying national circumstances; consider the role of existing instruments; recognize countries' sovereign right to manage their forests; include a financial instrument; and involve NGOs.

Others preferred to create an intergovernmental forum on forests or some other arrangement. CHINA said it is necessary to consider which option has the widest support and noted that most countries are not yet ready to negotiate a convention. The US said the IPF outcome reveals that consensus is still lacking on key issues, and countries are not ready to negotiate a meaningful convention. She recommended: convening an intergovernmental forum to review progress in implementing the action proposals; targeting assistance to national and local capacity-building; encouraging responsible private sector activities such as voluntary codes of conduct for SFM; and promoting market mechanisms and economic instruments for SFM.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA said outstanding challenges include political will for a legally-binding global regime covering all types of forests with a sound, predictable financial mechanism. He asserted that forests involve a sovereign right. BANGLADESH does not totally oppose a convention, but is in no hurry to draft one. IUCN proposed that the final CSD-5 report urge implementation of IPF conclusions. He called for consideration of forests within the wider contexts of biodiversity and trade.

AUSTRALIA supported establishing an intergovernmental forum under the CSD to provide high-level policy guidance with a review of the need for its continuation in five years. He was not yet convinced of the need for a convention. PERU said regional and subregional processes should be consolidated before beginning an international negotiation. COLOMBIA questioned the need for a legally-binding instrument and the effectiveness of existing institutions. He said SFM demands adoption of cross-sectoral policies and measures.

INDIA emphasized countries' sovereignty over their resources. He did not support a convention until its basis is fully established and necessary consensus on its objectives emerges. It must address poverty and consumption patterns and provide financial resources. ECUADOR supported national forest programmes, consideration of varying national contexts, and recognition and protection of

traditional communities and knowledge. GUYANA advocated improved implementation and fulfillment of existing initiatives and commitments before plunging into convention negotiations. He noted that many countries that depend heavily on their forest resources have legitimate concerns about rushing into a convention.

BRAZIL supported a continued forest policy dialogue in an intergovernmental forum with a mandate to implement the IPF recommendations and examine the possibilities for a convention without prejudging its outcome. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA supported the establishment of a high-level policy forum under the CSD without time limits. NEW ZEALAND said regional initiatives regarding indicators for SFM should be given political impetus, and a high-level forum should seek implementation of the IPF recommendations.

The GLOBAL FOREST POLICY PROJECT proposed that the CSD establish an open-ended intergovernmental forum on forests that is transparent and participatory and focuses implementation and follow-up of the IPF's recommendations. He said the convention question should not be considered until 2000 lest it dominate the forest policy debate and detract from much-needed implementation. ISRAEL highlighted the relationship between forests and combating desertification and the special needs of countries with low forest cover. JAPAN called for coordinated implementation of the IPF action proposals and for a forum to discuss and reach consensus on key issues, including financial mechanisms and coordination, and then to enter into convention negotiations.

URUGUAY said a forest convention is premature until coordination between existing instruments is improved. CHILE supported stable and equitable standards recognized by all, but said there is not yet sufficient consensus to enshrine this in a convention. EGYPT stressed that forest management in tropical zones requires efficient water management and highlighted the close relationship between forest management and combating desertification. ARGENTINA supported a continued dialogue with a limited time-frame and favored laying the groundwork to eventually negotiate a convention. A SIBERIAN FOREST REPRESENTATIVE said the post-IPF implementation phase would serve as an indicator of serious political intent and that forest discussions at CSD-5 and UNGASS should not be dominated by debate on a convention.

IN THE CORRIDORS

At his informal sessions with ministers, CSD-5 Chair Tolba has explored ways to improve national feedback on finance, targets, implementation and follow-up. One of Tolba's suggestions is the development of a five- or ten-year plan and an annual reporting procedure at the CSD where specific obstacles to national implementation could be discussed with experts. Chair Tolba is also determined to pursue the issue of agreement on technical or financial solutions once problems have been identified.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

PLENARY: The Plenary will meet in Conference Room 3 in the morning to hear presentations on preparatory activities and to consider issues not dealt with in the Intersessional Working Group (national reporting, Barbados Programme of Action and budget) during the afternoon.

DIALOGUE WITH MAJOR GROUPS: Dialogue sessions will be conducted during the morning with Youth and during the afternoon with the Scientific and Technological Communities in Conference Room 1.