



Earth Negotiations Bulletin

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UNGASS HIGHLIGHTS WEDNESDAY, 25 JUNE 1997

UNGASS participants heard 43 statements in Plenary and met in numerous negotiating groups to consider outstanding issues in the draft UNGASS texts. Two Heads of State and Government, 1 Crown Prince, 6 Vice-Presidents and Deputy Prime Ministers, 26 Ministers, 6 international organization heads and 2 NGO representatives spoke during morning and afternoon Plenary meetings. Discussions on sectoral and cross-sectoral issues and the draft political statement continued in the Committee of the Whole, informal ministerial consultations and a contact group on forests.

DRAFT POLITICAL STATEMENT

Delegates discussed paragraphs 8, 9 and 10 of the draft political statement during the afternoon, chaired by COW Chair Tolba. Based on discussions, the Chair will produce revised texts. A contact group will consider text in 7 (integration) on, *inter alia*, coercive economic measures and foreign occupation.

On 8 (globalization), the G-77/CHINA proposed language on, *inter alia*: sustainable economic growth; unilateral measures that create trade obstacles; open and equitable global economic relations; refraining from protectionist tendencies; an environment to help developing countries produce goods; and international support for capacity building in trade and environment. JAPAN, the US and the EU objected to the sentence on global economic relations. The US proposed referring to economic growth in the context of sustainable development and objected to references to unilateral measures. The EUROPEAN COMMISSION, on behalf of the EU, preferred existing language and noted that the G-77/CHINA text from the Agenda for Development did not reflect the balance of that agreement. RUSSIA, UKRAINE, BELARUS, ROMANIA and AUSTRALIA expressed concern that countries with economies in transition should not be excluded.

On 9 (unsustainable consumption and production), ICELAND, supported by CANADA, proposed a reference to renewable energy sources, but the G-77/CHINA and SAUDI ARABIA objected. NORWAY suggested a reference to unsustainable patterns beyond industrialized countries. KOREA supported retention of a reference to environmental ethics. A number of delegations objected to the proposal for "factor four." RUSSIA proposed assisting "other" countries, rather than "developing."

On 10 (poverty), the G-77/CHINA proposed, *inter alia*, deleting target dates for strengthening national policies on poverty and

adding time-bound commitments for transferring resources. JAPAN and the US objected to time-bound commitments. The US opposed deleting the target date for national policies. RUSSIA proposed that eradication of poverty was a priority for "all" countries. The US supported sustained economic growth "in the context of sustainable development." The EU preferred "economic growth that is sustained and sustainable."

PROPOSED PROGRAMME FOR THE FURTHER IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 21

Vice-Chair John Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda) chaired morning and evening negotiations on outstanding cross-sectoral issues. Intersessional Co-Chair Derek Osborn (UK) chaired afternoon and evening discussions on outstanding sectoral issues.

Integration of economic, social and environmental objectives: In paragraph 23 (making trade and environment mutually supportive), delegates agreed to text noting that the elimination of discriminatory and protectionist trade practices will improve access for developing countries' exports and facilitate the full integration of economies in transition. In 23(b) (multilateral trading system), the EC and US supported the reference to trade and environment policies being mutually supportive. The G-77/CHINA preferred to delete "policies." A reformulation based on GA resolution 51/167 was considered. The US supported the call for considering effects on sustainable development in connection with decisions on further liberalization. INDIA believed the WTO's Committee on Trade and Environment (CTE) is the appropriate forum for such deliberations.

In 23(f) (cooperation between relevant institutions), INDIA repeated her reservation to strengthening cooperation between UNCTAD, UNIDO, WTO, UNEP and other relevant institutions on environment and sustainable development issues in the context of domestic and FDI, including a possible multilateral framework on investment. The EC supported the text. On subparagraph 23(f)bis (effective dialogue with major groups within the WTO CTE), AUSTRALIA opposed an INDIAN proposal to delete the subparagraph and suggested a reference to NGOs working on trade and environment issues in specific organizations. MEXICO asked for a reference to CTE rules for participation of major groups. The US added language on important NGO work. The paragraph remained bracketed.

On 23(h) (making trade and environment mutually supportive), the US introduced language from Agenda 21 on avoiding arbitrary and unjustifiable trade discrimination. The EC said the WTO,

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UNEP and UNCTAD should consider ways to make trade and environment mutually supportive. There was no agreement during the morning.

Sectors and issues: On 29 (initiating a strategic approach on freshwater), TURKEY and ETHIOPIA noted concerns with the reference to “customary uses” of water. The EU suggested that they specify this concern in their reservations. Chair Osborn invited comments on the energy section in paragraphs 35-39. SAUDI ARABIA proposed deletion of subparagraphs 39(a) (energy at CSD-9), 39(g) (cost internalization) and 39(h) (coordination on energy issues at the UN), which had been agreed *ad referendum*. NIGERIA, supported by LIBYA, wanted to delete details of CSD-9 preparations in 39(a). CANADA, the US, AUSTRALIA, JAPAN, NORWAY and the EU resisted the call to re-open negotiations. Chair Osborn said he would report the situation regarding the views of SAUDI ARABIA, NIGERIA and LIBYA to the COW. On subparagraph 40(e) (aviation fuel tax), the G-77/CHINA asked for immediate deletion. The EU said it should go to the COW.

On five proposals for a paragraph 42 (FCCC COP-3 negotiations in Kyoto), the Chair said he would report that the group could not reach agreement, and that two new proposals had been tabled: one for deletion and one, from JAPAN, supported by the US and possibly CANADA, for a new draft paragraph based on the Group of 8 communique from Denver. The EU, supported by AOSIS, favored ministerial consultations on the options. AOSIS said the G-8 figures would be unacceptable. SAUDI ARABIA, NIGERIA, VENEZUELA and IRAN called for deletion. KOREA and RUSSIA supported the proposal urging agreement on a satisfactory COP-3 result.

On paragraph 49 (radioactive wastes), delegations responding to G-77/CHINA proposals, agreed to: drop a reference to Principle 2 of the Rio Declaration and underline “all” Principles; and conduct, as appropriate, health studies around sites affected by nuclear activities with a view to identifying where health treatment may be needed and should be provided. They agreed with RUSSIAN proposals to: replace references to nuclear wastes with “radioactive wastes;” state (in paragraphs 49 and 50) that radioactive wastes “should be” disposed of in the territory of the State in which they are produced, to be consistent with the forthcoming IAEA Convention.

In 55 (desertification and drought), the G-77/CHINA supported text noting that the international community should “ensure new and additional financial resources.” The US objected to the reference to new and additional resources. The EU offered to replace the new and additional reference, *ad referendum*, with “promote actions leading to the mobilization and channelling of substantial resources for” implementation. Informal consultations will continue.

In 65 (human-made or technological disasters), delegations agreed, *ad referendum*, to the proposal to use “Other disasters with an adverse impact on the environment” in the title and introductory sentence.

Means of implementation: On 67 (ODA), the G-77/CHINA supported the reference to ODA remaining a main source of external funding and called for deletion of a reference to a role for ODA in encouraging country-driven policy reform efforts. The US, EU and AUSTRALIA objected to the latter, which was reformulated to encourage, “where appropriate, all aspects of country-driven capacity building and strengthening.” The

G-77/CHINA reordered the institutions in 73 (understanding the impact of indebtedness) to invite the UN, the World Bank and the IMF to collaborate with UNCTAD in considering the interrelationship between indebtedness and sustainable development. In 74 (domestic resource mobilization), the G-77/CHINA added text noting that, while financing for the implementation of Agenda 21 will come from countries’ own public and private sectors, international cooperation is also essential. The EU placed the international cooperation reference at the beginning of the sentence and the US, supported by AUSTRALIA, replaced “essential” with “important,” to which the G-77/CHINA added “very.” Delegates deliberated into the night.

MINISTERIAL GROUP ON FORESTS

The Ministerial Group on Forests, co-chaired by Ministers from the Netherlands and Tanzania, met in the morning to discuss follow-up actions in this area. Countries outlined their support for one of three options: establishing an INC right away; setting up an intergovernmental forum on forests that would “elaborate elements of and build consensus for” an INC by 1999; or establishing a forum that would “consider the need for...a legally binding instrument by 1999.” Those supporting the establishment of an INC noted that, while the two-year IPF process was useful in clarifying key issues, more concrete action is now needed. Deforestation trends are worse since Rio, and the world is waiting for UNGASS to signal a real commitment to stem deforestation. Some who supported an INC noted that financing for a convention remained an essential question requiring further discussion.

Those opposing the establishment of an INC at this stage emphasized that the need for a convention was not yet clear. Instead, the clear need is to implement the IPF recommendations for action. These countries called for an intergovernmental forum to oversee the implementation of IPF recommendations, and to include within its mandate issues such as trade, financing and technology transfer, which were left pending by IPF. It would also examine whether an INC was necessary, and/or build consensus for it, and would report to the CSD by 1999. Following this discussion, the Co-Chairs prepared a summary of the discussion, as well as a new Co-Chairs’ proposal for follow-up. This proposal outlined a two-step process, including the establishment of a forum to report to the CSD by 1999, and a reconsideration of the question of a convention at that time, based upon the outcome of the first stage. Discussion on this document was postponed until the next Ministerial Group meeting, to be held Thursday morning. The contact group on forests met briefly in the afternoon, but decided to await the outcome of the Ministers’ Thursday meeting before reconvening.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

PLENARY: 44 speakers are expected to offer statements regarding implementation of Agenda 21 during morning and afternoon meetings in the General Assembly Hall.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE: Ministerial consultations are expected from 9:30-10:30 am. The Ministerial Group on forests may also meet. The group considering cross-sectoral issues is expected to meet at 10:00 in a room to be announced. The group considering the draft political statement will meet at 10:30 in Room 3 and continue at 3:00.