



## UNEP GOVERNING COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS THURSDAY, 8 FEBRUARY 2001

Delegates convened in Plenary for the opening of the ministerial-level segment of the meeting, which was followed by a roundtable ministerial dialogue on implementation and development of the Nairobi and Malmö Declarations. Two break-out groups, on poverty and pollution and on poverty and health, were also held. The Committee of the Whole (COW) convened in afternoon and evening sessions to continue considering draft decisions. The drafting group, working group on budget and administrative matters, and several informal contact groups also met.

### PLENARY

**OPENING CEREMONY:** In his introductory remarks, Governing Council President David Anderson reminded delegates of the importance of the Ministerial Forum leading up to the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development. Nitin Desai, UN Under-Secretary-General of Economic and Social Affairs, said he considered the Session to be the launch for the Summit. Mohammed Valli Moosa, South African Minister of Environment and Tourism, underscored the need for public mobilization and proposed seven elements to guide discussions on governance, including: defining workable institutional arrangements; addressing finances, including examining decision-making of international financial institutions; and instituting a system that empowers developing countries to participate meaningfully. He proposed that discussion on governance be conducted at the Ministerial level, as the issues are political.

Two children spoke to the gathering, saying they were making two sculptures: a tree symbolizing the tree of life; and a bridge, symbolizing dialogue among civilizations, and bridges between rich and poor and young and old.

UNEP/UNON/UNCHS staff union President Mary Odhiambo paid special tribute to UNEP Executive Director Klaus Töpfer on efforts to promote open staff dialogue. Tokiko Kato, UNEP Envoy of Japan, stressed concern over a changing global environment and performed two songs. Klaus Töpfer emphasized the need for a successful World Summit on Sustainable Development resulting in concrete decisions and actions. He called for financial backing to assist UNEP fulfill its commitment to the Summit. Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi highlighted UNEP's financial constraints, stressed mobilization of traditional and non-traditional resources, and urged the private sector to make contributions.

**ROUNDTABLE MINISTERIAL DIALOGUE:** Following the opening speeches, the ministerial roundtable on implementation and development of the Nairobi and Malmö Declarations convened. The EU supported: a global chemicals strategy; enhanced international environmental governance; renewed partnerships; adequate resources; and strengthening the GEF. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION said the trend toward globalization and growth of environmental risks demands new approaches to solving environmental problems. He also called for a joint group for coop-

eration in providing assistance to countries with disasters and a global network for information exchange. JAPAN said UNEP should be improved and its financial difficulties resolved, and noted UNEP's important role in coordinating MEAs.

Nitin Desai highlighted preparatory activities for and expectations of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and stressed the importance of national preparations. He said the Summit was expected to address, *inter alia*: globalization; the anti-poverty agenda; financing for development; and international environmental governance.

### MINISTERIAL CONSULTATIONS ON ENVIRONMENT AND POVERTY:

In the afternoon, Plenary discussed environment and poverty issues. Sartaj Aziz, Pakistan's former Minister of Finance and Planning, and Foreign Affairs, discussed linkages between poverty and environment, recommending, *inter alia*, that UNEP consider establishing a task force on environment and poverty to further explore linkages. Ann Kern, Executive Director, Sustainable Development and Health, WHO, highlighted links between health, environment and poverty, noting that disease undermines economic progress and has spread with globalization. She called for action on: indoor pollution, water and sanitation, global warming and chemicals. Plenary then split into two break-out groups: poverty and pollution; and poverty and health.

**BREAK-OUT GROUPS: Poverty and Pollution:** This group was chaired by Dutch Environment Minister Jan Pronk, who posed three questions to the group: is overconsumption causing "overpollution" and thereby increasing poverty elsewhere; is pollution equally affecting the poor and the rich; and should priority be given to anti-pollution measures or to poverty eradication? Many delegates agreed that overconsumption leads to over-pollution. Some participants distinguished between global and local pollution, noting that both are the result of inefficient use of resources. Most participants said the poor are affected more than the rich because even if the degree of pollution is comparable, the rich have more resources to combat its effects. Many delegates said priority should be given to poverty eradication rather than anti-pollution measures, noting that once people are informed and educated, they are better able to fight pollution. Some said the two strategies should be integrated and addressed concurrently. Some agreed that pollution was inevitable with economic growth, and said it should be controlled at the source.

Renewable energy utilization, biotechnology, cleaner production and recycling were highlighted as poverty combatants, and a number of delegates opposed single input solutions to poverty. International measures suggested by the group included: regulation of companies; fighting illegal transport of toxic waste and dumping; and debt relief measures to free-up resources for both anti-poverty and anti-pollution strategies.

**Poverty and health:** This group was chaired by Harry Ian Thompson, Malawi's Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs. Delegates highlighted the following issues for consideration for UNEP's input for the World Summit on Sustainable Development: water, sanitation, pollution and waste manage-

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ment and the impacts on health of mercury, uranium, PCB, DDT and dioxin. Delegates differed on whether UNEP, or FAO and WHO, should provide leadership on these issues.

Due to differences in regional priorities, delegates agreed to have regional preparatory processes and, in order to enhance implementation, supported participation by health and environment ministers. A representative of the Global Legislators Organization for a Balanced Environment (GLOBE) urged the involvement of Parliamentarians, as they influence resource use, supply bilateral and multilateral aid and ratify and implement treaties.

Regarding capacities, delegates from small Pacific islands stressed challenges in waste disposal, while African countries called for financial, technological and capacity-building support aimed at self-sufficiency.

There was consensus that the outputs of the Summit should be action-oriented and manageable. They should target rural and urban needs as appropriate, distinguish between developed and developing countries' responsibilities, and enhance synergies. Delegates stressed the need to ratify pending environmental agreements to avoid their proving counterproductive to the Summit.

Following the break-out group meetings, Plenary reconvened to hear brief reports from the Chairs of the groups.

### COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

The COW met in the afternoon and evening to continue consideration of several draft decisions, adopting one decision and agreeing to consider all others in a session on Friday.

**ROLE OF YOUTH:** A decision on youth participation and engagement drafted by youth representatives attending the meeting and submitted by Canada and the EU was considered and adopted by the COW.

**CHEMICALS:** Draft decisions related to the chemicals agenda were forwarded to a working group, which will report back to the COW on Friday morning.

**TRADE AND ENVIRONMENT:** On this draft decision, CHINA, supported by the US and EGYPT, raised concerns that environment and trade links could result in discriminatory trade barriers or investment flaws. An informal contact group was convened that reached consensus on the draft decision. The redrafted text will be presented to the COW.

**FORESTS:** The COW addressed a draft decision proposed by Iran on the UN Forum on Forests and enhancing UNEP's role in relation to forest issues. After amendments were introduced by several delegates, the matter was set aside for further consideration.

**GLOBAL ASSESSMENT OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT:** Chair Radziejowski indicated that the COW would take up the draft decision proposed by Iceland on Global Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment on Friday.

**ENVIRONMENTAL EMERGENCIES:** On the further improvement of the strategic framework on environmental emergency prevention, preparedness, assessment, response and mitigation, Deputy Executive Director Kakakhel noted that informal consultations had been held to resolve outstanding issues, but that further negotiations were required.

**GUIDELINES ON COMPLIANCE, ENFORCEMENT, AND ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME:** A contact group formed on Wednesday submitted consensus text on the draft decision relating to guidelines on compliance with international environmental agreements and effective national environmental enforcement and international cooperation and coordination in combating environmental crimes. The redrafted text will be considered by the COW.

**GOVERNANCE:** Deputy Executive Director Kakakhel said there were two aspects to the issue of governance - governance of UNEP and global governance. Delegates considered the draft decision on UNEP, before establishing a contact group to discuss proposed amendments.

### WORKING GROUP ON BUDGETARY MATTERS

The Group considered the draft decision on administrative and other budgetary matters, and proposed and discussed numerous amendments. Participants agreed to forward a revised text to the COW. The Group also considered the draft decision on Mercure satellite communications systems. Delegates were informed that

Kenya was in negotiations with UNEP on this issue. However the text was agreed with a number of amendments after consensus that it was without prejudice to these negotiations.

### DRAFTING GROUP

The Group continued considering draft decisions forwarded by the COW. The following draft decisions were approved with minor amendments: the status of international conventions and protocols in the field of the environment; establishment of a regional seas programme for the East Central Pacific region; atmosphere; further development and strengthening of regional seas programmes; promoting the conservation and sustainable use of the marine and coastal environment; building partnerships and establishing linkages with multilateral environmental agreements; participation of UNEP in the work of GEF; and coral reefs.

On support to Africa, one country added "within available resources" with regard to financial support to Africa's participation in the forthcoming COP-7 of UNFCCC and World Summit on Sustainable Development. Another expressed the concern that the decision might exclude financial support to other countries and regions. Delegates approved the draft decision with the proposed additional language. On biosafety, one country proposed deleting reference to the UNEP International Technical Guidelines for Safety in Biotechnology. Another added a new paragraph requesting UNEP's Executive Director to mobilize funds to support capacity building of developing countries and countries with economies in transition. The draft decision was agreed with the proposals. Regarding further improvement of the strategic framework on environmental emergency prevention, preparedness, assessment, response and mitigation, discussion centered around several new paragraphs presented by one delegation. Some delegations noted the uncertainty of terms such as "manmade accidents and disasters" and "non-economic environmental harms." The proposal was agreed with some linguistic amendments.

On the implementation of the Malmö Declaration, several countries expressed concern that the Declaration has superseded the Nairobi Declaration and redefined UNEP's mandate. Others stressed the importance of implementing the Malmö Declaration and the Executive Director's mandate to monitor and report on such implementation. After lengthy debate, the draft decision was approved unchanged, with the understanding that the Malmö Declaration has not superseded the Nairobi Declaration or changed UNEP's mandate.

### IN THE BREEZEWAYS

"Confusion" was the word on many delegates' lips today. Uncertainty about the procedures and organization of the COW and its informal groups continued as delegates struggled to work their way through a large number of draft decisions. Several observers voiced concern that time is fast running out for the COW to secure agreement on all the outstanding texts, in spite of the formation of several informal groups. However, while some participants are questioning whether sufficient time remains for the COW to complete its work, others remain optimistic that it will rise to the challenge.

### THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE:** The COW is scheduled to convene at 10:00 am to hear reports from informal groups and will attempt to reach agreement on all the outstanding draft decisions and adopt its report.

**PLENARY:** Plenary will convene at 9:30 am to consider environmental vulnerability of natural and manmade disasters, followed by discussions on governance. At 3:00 pm, delegates are expected to meet for the Closing Plenary, adopt the provisional agenda and determine the date and venue of the Governing Council's seventh special session and 22nd regular session.

**SPECIAL EVENTS:** A workshop on Compliance and Enforcement will take place from 1:00 pm in Conference Room 3. A workshop on Renewable Energy Technology: Potential for Africa, will begin at 1:00 pm in the Tent.