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GC/GMEF-3 HIGHLIGHTS: THURSDAY, 14 FEBRUARY 2002

The GC/GMEF met in Ministerial Consultations to consider international environmental governance (IEG) and UNEP's contribution to the WSSD. The Committee of the Whole (COW) completed reviewing implementation of decisions adopted at the 21st GC/GMEF. Contact groups met informally throughout the day to prepare draft decisions on chemicals and civil society engagement with UNEP, as well as UNEP's financing. An informal group, co-chaired by Juan Mayr (Colombia) and Michael Meacher (UK), met into the evening and reconvened at 11:00 pm to consider outstanding issues on the IEG on the basis of revised draft recommendations.

GMEF MINISTERIAL CONSULTATIONS

Ministers completed presentations on IEG, and began considering UNEP's contributions to the WSSD.

INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE: GC President David Anderson reconvened the Ministerial Consultation on IEG. IRAN, the RUSSIAN FEDERATION and UGANDA called for contributions to UNEP from the private sector. GAMBIA and others emphasized a strengthened financial base for UNEP with contributions to the Environment Fund from all stakeholders. IRAN supported an increased share of the UN regular budget for UNEP. POLAND supported UNEP funding on the basis of a biennial indicative scale of contributions. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION questioned the need for universal membership of the GMEF, while others supported it.

CANADA said the GC/GMEF was the cornerstone of a more coherent IEG system. SOUTH AFRICA said IEG restructuring must lead to greater empowerment for developing countries in environmental processes, particularly in Africa. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA offered to host the GC/GMEF in 2004. GERMANY called for more efficient global environmental instruments comparable to the WTO, and transforming UNEP into a world environment organization. MAURITIUS expressed regret that the debate on IEG had become emotional, and emphasized that all governments supported a strengthened UNEP. INDONESIA said a final decision should be taken within the broader sustainable development governance framework. GREECE supported a role for the GMEF in mainstreaming the environment in policy making. THAILAND supported strengthening UNEP regional offices. KENYA supported enhanced UNEP collaboration with institutions involved in trade and human rights and noted that universal membership of the GMEF could lead to conflict. IRAQ called for UNEP assistance to address the use of enriched uranium. BRAZIL supported further efforts on clustering, and advocated strengthening the GC/GMEF role in the coordination of international environmental priorities.

BANGLADESH called for a holistic approach in addressing MEAs, with standardized rules of operation and implementation. The US opposed GMEF as the overarching authority on the environment, and said UNEP should focus on activities where it has a comparative advantage. MONACO said a strengthened IEG should not undermine regional activities. JAPAN called for action-oriented results with concrete time frames. JAMAICA called for greater coordination and collaboration between UNEP and UNDP.

NIGERIA described the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which will establish new partnerships to tackle key social, economic and environmental challenges. He said the GC/GMEF agenda issues were all key elements for the new partnership. The HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT IN THE AMERICAS REGION Ministerial initiative said the link between the environment and health will be a key theme on the road to the WSSD.

CONTRIBUTION OF UNEP TO THE WSSD: Klaus Töpfer introduced this agenda item (UNEP/GCSS.VII/3), highlighting the upcoming release of the 3rd Global Environment Outlook report (GEO-3). The CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM said democracy was a prerequisite for sustainability. SOUTH AFRICA welcomed the emphasis placed on the social and economic pillars of sustainable development at the second preparatory meeting for the WSSD. He also welcomed the timing of the International Conference on Financing for Development, which could put in place elements for a partnership between developing and developed countries, and a partnership with the private sector. He underlined the role of UNEP's input to the WSSD agenda and elaborated on the significance of the WSSD for Africa and for the post-September 11th world.

Colombia, for the G-77/CHINA, emphasized reaffirming past commitments and establishing mechanisms to ensure their future fulfillment. Spain, for the EU, lamented lack of strong commitment to compliance, enforcement and liability in the Executive Director's policy statement. INDIA said raising public awareness should be a major component of the Summit. Highlighting support to Africa, SWEDEN said strategies to improve local environmental conditions must take youth into account. DENMARK urged the WSSD to create new partnerships between government and the private sector. UGANDA supported development of vulnerability indices. VENEZUELA, with FINLAND, emphasized that women can become major contributors to sustainable development policy. The PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION urged alliances with other sectors. Noting the opportunity of the Summit to change the objectives and vision of sustainable development, IRAN stressed a new approach with ethical and spiritual dimensions.

GERMANY stressed and discussed sustainable energy, freshwater resources and legislation. NEW ZEALAND underscored the need for knowledge for behavior change, stressing the role of the media. FINLAND stressed actions, *inter alia*, in energy efficiency and

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promoting stronger environmental awareness in international trade and international financial institutions. CAMBODIA stressed good governance. CANADA called for more effective management based on science and partnerships. Using fish stocks as an example, AUSTRALIA said UNEP could contribute in areas where environment, economic and social aspects interface. BANGLADESH called attention to arsenic poisoning of groundwater. The US called for bold new public and private partnerships.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

The COW concluded the review of UNEP's implementation of the 21st GC/GMEF decisions and agreed on three new draft decisions. Contact groups on chemicals and civil society engagement with UNEP met in parallel with the Committee and produced draft decisions to be submitted to the COW for approval on Friday.

ENHANCEMENT OF CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT

WITH UNEP: Continuing with the discussion, which began on Wednesday, the EU emphasized, *inter alia*: civil society involvement in the entire policy process; establishment of an agreed framework for civil society engagement; the Aarhus Convention as a civil society participation model; and participation of all civil society organizations, not solely international. CHINA opposed altering the rules of procedure and urged careful consideration of the need for a global forum for civil society. INDIA requested further elaboration on the draft strategy. KENYA expressed concern over capacity building for local civil societies and called for funding to facilitate meetings prior to GC sessions. SWITZERLAND supported the draft decision and encouraged UNEP to develop a partnership with civil society. NORWAY said the inter-governmental nature of the GC should not be used as an excuse not to interact with civil society and supported establishing a global forum and amending the rules of procedure. The CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM called for meetings with civil society before GC/GMEF meetings and resources to facilitate such engagement. A contact group chaired by Inga Björk-Klevby (Sweden) was set up to prepare a draft decision.

GPA FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT

UNEP: introduced the report of the Montreal Meeting that reviewed the Global Programme of Action for the protection of the marine environment (UNEP/GCSS/VI/4/Add.4) and the draft decision contained in the report. SENEGAL, with COTE D'IVOIRE, stressed referring to related regional programmes and actions aimed at poverty eradication, and SOUTH AFRICA called attention to governance structures on ocean and marine resource management, and supported establishing a stronger compliance system. The draft decision was accepted after references to regional and subregional programmes were included.

ENVIRONMENTAL SITUATION IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES

UNEP: presented the report (UNEP/GCSS.VII/4/Add 3), and explained obstacles to the UNEP Executive Director's (ED) visit to the region. EGYPT proposed a draft decision (UNEP/GCSS/VII/CRP.2) co-sponsored by JORDAN, which PALESTINE, CUBA, IRAN, IRAQ, LIBYA, MOROCCO, OMAN and SAUDI ARABIA supported. ISRAEL reported having agreed to the EDs visit and recounted the effects of the breakdown of collaboration with the Palestinian Authority following the outbreak of hostilities in September 2000. PALESTINE also provided an account. The revised decision, which was accepted by consensus in the afternoon, *inter alia*: requests the ED to visit the region with a view to establishing a framework and modalities for the study proposed by previous GC sessions, to designate a team of experts to prepare a desk study on the environmental situation in the affected area, and to undertake field studies as necessary; and invites the concerned parties to cooperate with the ED.

OTHER DECISIONS: On implementation of the Malmö Ministerial Declaration, the EU called for transforming decisions into real actions at all levels. KENYA commended UNEP's work in environmental assessment, support to conventions and case studies.

GAMBIA called for support for UNEP programmes, particularly the implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification. On Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration, the EU, with SENEGAL, encouraged UNEP to continue to develop regional agreements and support developing countries. She also called for awareness raising and reinforcement of UNCED legal instruments. The EU will submit a draft decision to the COW on Friday.

On trade and environment, the EC emphasized technical assistance to developing countries, and called for cooperation between UNEP and WTO, and dialogue between WTO and MEAs. SENEGAL and KENYA also highlighted developing country capacity building on trade and environment, with KENYA noting that policies in this area should reflect economic development priorities.

On support to Africa, the EU stressed the need to achieve social stability, including eradication of poverty and improvement of the region's economic condition. SENEGAL called for continuous support to the region and promotion of civil society participation in decision making. SWITZERLAND commended UNEP's work in helping African countries to develop environmental laws.

STATUS OF THE ENVIRONMENT FUND AND OTHER RESOURCES: Delegates heard a report on UNEP's financial situation, which highlights reallocation of resources for practical reasons.

INFORMAL OPEN MINISTERIAL-LEVEL CONSULTATIONS ON IEG

Environment Ministers Juan Mayr (Colombia) and Michael Meacher (UK) convened informal ministerial-level consultations on IEG.

On the GC/GMEF role in international environmental policy making, the US dropped objections to a reference to improved "coherence". On a high level forum for policy dialogue, the US objected to taking the GC/GMEF in the direction of a world environment organization. The G-77/CHINA and the RUSSIAN FEDERATION also objected. The EU, supported by NORWAY and LIBYA, agreed the need for an umbrella forum. On universal membership, the AFRICAN GROUP and the G-77/CHINA agreed that the question be considered in the context of the WSSD preparatory process. JAPAN flagged his future opposition. The US described a paragraph on clarifying the relationship between the GC/GMEF and COP/MEAs as a recipe for disaster. On proposals to convert UNEP into a specialized agency, the G-77/CHINA, the US and the RUSSIAN FEDERATION proposed deleting the text, while NORWAY proposed moving it to the section on Future Perspective or creating a High Commissioner for the Global Environment. The chair of a contact group on UNEP financing, John Ashe, introduced "final agreed text." The EU said he had not been mandated to accept Ashe's text as final. The US said that some text on finance in the draft IEG report had not been discussed. Co-chair Meacher invited amendments.

Consultations were scheduled to reconvene at 11 p.m. Co-chair Meacher was expected to present new formulations of contentious text.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Investing in contact groups paid off on Thursday, with progress reported on a number of fronts, especially on chemicals. This group reached agreement on a draft decision. Debate over the two days focused on, *inter alia*: the comprehensiveness of the strategic framework; adoption of the Bahia Declaration developed under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety as the foundation for the strategy; as well as the strategy's adoption by the WSSD and the need for its further development, and whether such work would be conducted in an open-ended process.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

GMEF: The Ministerial Consultation will resume from 10:00 am – 1:00 pm in Room 2 to continue discussion on UNEP's contribution to the WSSD and is expected to revisit IEG. Look for a draft communiqué on UNEP's contribution to the WSSD.

COW: The Committee will meet in Room 1 from 10:00 am – 1:00 pm to hear reports from the contact groups on chemicals, civil society, and Rio Principle 10, and to approve the COW's draft decisions.

CLOSING PLENARY: The final Plenary is expected to convene at 3:00 pm to consider credentials of representatives, and adopt the Council's decisions and report. Algeria's Environment Minister, C. Rahman, is expected to make a speech.