



IGSP-3 HIGHLIGHTS: THURSDAY, 2 DECEMBER 2004

The third session of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Intergovernmental Strategic Plan on Technology Support and Capacity Building (IGSP) convened on Thursday with opening statements, followed by the adoption of the agenda and the organization of work. In the afternoon, delegates convened in two Working Groups to deliberate the draft IGSP as outlined in the compilation text (UNEP/IEG/IGSP/3/2). Working Group I addressed sections on objectives and strategic considerations, and Working Group II discussed the section on institutional mechanisms.

OPENING PLENARY

Intergovernmental Working Group Chair Ntagazwa opened the plenary, noting that the outcome of the session will be named the "Bali Strategic Plan." He urged delegates to regard the undertaking as a joint responsibility and finalize the Plan at this meeting in order for it to be formally adopted at UNEP GC/GMEF in February 2005.

Susanto Sutoyo, Director General of Multilateral Economic, Finance and Development Affairs of Indonesia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said the Plan should strengthen UNEP's efforts in technology support and capacity building, particularly for developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

Shafkat Kakakhel, UNEP Deputy Executive Director, stressed that the IGSP constitutes a central pillar for the intergovernmental process on sustainable development, and said the Plan should reflect national, as well as regional needs and priorities. He highlighted UNEP's leading role in global environmental issues and announced that the Memorandum of Understanding between UNEP and UNDP would be signed later this month in New York.

Rachmat Witoelar, Indonesia's State Minister for Environment, highlighted key areas in the effective implementation of technology support and capacity building programmes, and identified the requirement to address: gaps and needs in recipient countries; financing mechanisms; and the institutional aspect for monitoring and assessing effectiveness.

Delegates then adopted the agenda (UNEP/IEG/IGSP/3/1) and agreed to the organization of work. The co-facilitators of the two Working Groups reported on progress of the informal consultations held on Wednesday, 1 December. Idunn Eidheim (Norway), facilitator of Working Group I, said the Group had made significant headway and prepared new text on the

section outlining the objectives/guiding principles of the IGSP. Bagher Asadi (Iran), facilitator of Working Group II, voiced his expectation to complete negotiations of the compilation text in Bali.

General Statements: THAILAND with SAMOA reported on the outcome of the Asia-Pacific Subregional Consultation on Capacity Building and Technology Support, held on 17 November 2004, in Bangkok, Thailand. She noted that while much progress had been made in the field of environment-related capacity building and technology transfer, there are still many gaps in addressing national and regional needs. She highlighted several points put forth by the Consultation, including: the importance of addressing priority issues identified at the national and regional level; the use of the Montreal Protocol as a successful model of financing; securing the role of small and medium-sized enterprises in capacity building through innovative financing; the importance of education; and the role of indigenous technologies.

Monika Linn, Environmental Management Group (EMG), reported on the work of the EMG's Issue Management Group (IMG) on the Strategic Plan (UNEP/IEG/IGSP/3/INF/5). She said the IMG noted examples of existing cooperation among UN agencies in the field of capacity building and technology transfer, identified gaps in coordination, and highlighted opportunities for improvement.

Peter Herkenrath, UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre, and Craig Boljkovac, UN Institute for Training and Research, reported on the biodiversity and chemicals-related studies on capacity building and technology support. Both speakers stressed that experience gained from the respective studies could contribute to the identification of the potential role of EMG in facilitating cooperation within the UN system.

In a brief discussion several delegates expressed hope that the Bali meeting would finalize the Plan for adoption at the next UNEP GC/GMEF. The G-77/CHINA cautioned against introducing new ideas at this stage, and emphasized putting the Plan on a sound financial platform, while focusing on the needs of developing countries. The EU drew attention to its paper, which offers new language on sections of the compilation text dealing with strategic considerations and implementation. She stressed UNEP's strategic position in a UN system-wide approach to capacity building, and suggested clarifying its role in coordination. The US warned against new detracting language, which would lead to an expansion of UNEP's and EMG's mandates, and called for the Plan to maintain a realistic



focus on UNEP and its efficient collaboration with, rather than coordination of, other actors.

PREPARATION OF THE DRAFT INTERGOVERNMENTAL STRATEGIC PLAN

WORKING GROUP I: On the section outlining the objectives/guiding principles of the IGSP, discussion focused on the new facilitator's proposal (UNEP/IEG/IGSP/3/CRP.1), developed as a result of the informal consultations held on Wednesday, 1 December. Delegates agreed to a suggestion from the EU and US to delete references to guiding principles in the title of the section. They also agreed to several new proposals from the G-77/China on: strengthening capacity of governments; developing national research, monitoring and assessment capacity to support national institutions in data collection, analysis and monitoring of environmental trends; and promoting technology transfer and corresponding know-how to developing countries and countries with economies in transition. Delegates also agreed to a US proposal on mainstreaming technology support and capacity building throughout UNEP, but could not decide on whether it should relate to UNEP's "programme of work" or to "activities." On strengthening the relationship between UNEP and MEAs, delegates could not agree whether the relationship should be one of "cooperation" or of "coordination."

On the section on strategic considerations, there was consensus to make the section more concise, with delegates agreeing to delete several paragraphs taken up in other sections of the compilation text. Several new paragraphs proposed by the EU were also added to the section.

MEXICO supported by the EU, and opposed by the US and CANADA, called for the deletion of language that would limit UNEP's activities to areas where it has a comparative advantage, stating that this would narrow the scope of the IGSP. On the use of the terms "coordination" and "cooperation" regarding UNEP's interaction with other UN agencies and relevant partners, delegates decided to revert to language used in decision SS/VII/1 from GCSS-7/GMEF, adopted in Cartagena in 2002, which refers to coordination between UNEP and other UN agencies and relevant bodies. On the EU's proposal to insert text regarding the strengthening of national institutions for the implementation of international commitments, the G-77/CHINA requested additional time for reflection, and MEXICO proposed an amendment to include language on promoting the implementation of regional action plans. On providing a basis for UNEP to play a role in the UN Development Group's (UNDG) framework in delivering capacity building and technology support, the EU preferred to use language in its paper that makes particular reference to developing links with UN regional and resident coordinators. The US and the G-77/CHINA could not agree on the EU's language, expressing concern over the institutional complexity of the UN system. UNDP stated that the EU's text could be interpreted to suggest that UNEP link directly to the UN regional and resident coordinators, thereby bypassing the UNDG. Facilitator Eidheim said the Secretariat will prepare a new text to reflect these comments.

WORKING GROUP II: On the introductory paragraph to the section on institutional mechanism/coordination, delegates agreed to use the G-77/China proposal as the basis for discussion. The US proposed text referencing intellectual property rights. On the role of the UN system, the EU suggested the retention of language that all agencies in the UN system keep the Plan "under review," while the US proposed that the UN system take the Plan "into account." The RUSSIAN FEDERATION and the

US called for the deletion of references to a UNEP focal point for coordination of the IGSP. The text was approved, with the understanding that the issue of the focal point would be reflected elsewhere in the compilation text.

On the subsection addressing global follow-up arrangements, the G-77/CHINA suggested retaining the opening paragraph, followed by a listing of the functions of the GC/GMEF, Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR), and the Executive Director. There was general agreement on this approach, with the US proposing moving references to budgetary allocations to the financial section, the EU suggesting retaining the text in brackets, and CANADA urging the deletion of language calling for necessary resources for implementation. Delegates agreed to a proposal from the Russian Federation on annual reporting on the IGSP's progress. SWITZERLAND, opposed by the RUSSIAN FEDERATION and the G-77/CHINA, called for an independent evaluation of the IGSP. The US questioned if this evaluation applied to other UN bodies apart from UNEP.

On the subsection on the regional level, the RUSSIAN FEDERATION proposed deleting specific references to the New Partnerships for Africa's Development and the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment. The G-77/CHINA offered to include programmes in other regions as well.

On the subsection dealing with the secretariat level/ UNEP organization, discussions focused on prioritizing the four options in the compilation text, with delegates agreeing to work on "marrying text" from the G-77/China and US options. On the issue of designating a UNEP focal point for the IGSP, the US said it wanted to see capacity building mainstreamed across all UNEP offices and divisions, including the regional offices, and opposed adopting a central focal point approach. He also proposed including text highlighting the need to avoid creating new layers of bureaucracy or new offices. He said the US would be more comfortable with a focal point, which acts as an information focal point only, stressing that central authority should only be given to the UNEP Executive Director. The G-77/CHINA, supported by the EU, underscored the need for a dedicated focal point in UNEP headquarters to ensure in-house coordination. Delegates also amended a proposal from the Russian Federation on strengthening the scientific and technical capacity of UNEP to enhance the delivery of technological advice and assistance related to environmentally-sound technologies and know-how. Delegates agreed to delete language that would enable the CPR to make recommendations to the GC/GMEF on the implementation of the Plan. The G-77/CHINA, opposed by the US, called for the deletion of paragraphs on reporting and the role of governments who are recipients of UNEP capacity building and technology support. Both paragraphs remain bracketed. Facilitator Asadi said the Secretariat would prepare new text of the entire subsection.

IN THE CORRIDORS

As delegates got down to hard bargaining on the Strategic Plan, some observed the emergence of three camps: one wanting a technical fix, another a political fix, and the third wishing to place the IGSP squarely within the framework of both the broader UN system coordination approach and the UN reform agenda. With only two days of negotiations left, the answer to how the three camps might converge seems to be hovering between "steadfast optimism" and "guarded pessimism." Several delegates experienced a sense of déjà vu, when the Chair proposed that the meeting conclude with a "Bali Strategic Plan". To them, this brought nostalgic memories of the WSSD Bali PrepCom in 2002.