



GC-23/GMEF HIGHLIGHTS: WEDNESDAY, 23 FEBRUARY 2005

Delegates to GC-23/GMEF met in the morning for the final session of the ministerial consultations to conclude discussions on the internationally agreed development goals, including those in the Millennium Declaration. The Committee of the Whole met in the morning, afternoon and evening to hear statements from MEA Secretariats, and consider cooperation and coordination within the UN system and several draft decisions. Contact groups on chemicals management, the Programme of Work and Budget and the drafting group met throughout the day and late into the evening.

MINISTERIAL CONSULTATIONS

The ministerial consultations were chaired by GC President Witoelar and moderated by the UK's Minister for Environment and Agri-Environment, Elliot Morley. Participants discussed the draft President's Summary entitled the "Nairobi Communiqué." UNEP Executive Director Klaus Töpfer said that it is not a negotiated document, but a discussion paper which reflects views expressed at the ministerial consultations for the GC President to present to CSD-13. Many delegations supported the draft Summary. INDIA, supported by the US, CANADA and VENEZUELA, opposed the document title and suggested calling it the "President's Summary." The US, supported by AUSTRALIA, said the "recommendations" in the document should be referred to as "policies".

In the discussion, delegates proposed the following amendments in relation to MDG's on the eradication of extreme poverty, gender and environmental sustainability:

- developing financial mechanisms for eradicating poverty, including taxation (EU, France and Germany);
- including a reference to "mutual responsibility" in relation to trade and debt (US);
- opposing a reference to 0.7% of GDP for ODA as an already established target (US);
- referring to countries with economies in transition when the Bali Strategic Plan is mentioned (the Russian Federation);
- including a reference to an overseeing body for investments in environmental sustainability (Australia);
- specifying LDCs in relation to debt (Lesotho, South Africa, and Swaziland);
- including a reference to youth participation (Lesotho);
- noting that the elimination of illiteracy should include adult illiteracy (South Africa);
- making a stronger statement on sanitation, chemicals and heavy metals (Norway and the EU);
- including a reference to gender equality and environmental skills in school curricula (EU, Lesotho and South Africa);

- supporting and implementing the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (Iceland);
- opposing a reference to "water market" (Palestine);
- highlighting reparation and recuperation of ecosystems (Peru);
- specifying that recommendations on implementation need to include a reference to human settlements (Dominican Republic and Colombia); and
- including a reference to community-based water management (The League of Arab States).

PLENARY

Chaired by GC Vice-President Barbu, the plenary discussed the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster. Klaus Töpfer highlighted UNEP's activities in response to the disaster, including UNEP's environmental impact assessments in seven countries. Pasi Rinne, UNEP, introduced the activities of UNEP's Tsunami Task Force, and emphasized the importance of developing an early-warning system and environmental assessments. Surendra Shrestha, UNEP's Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, presented the findings of the UNEP report "After the Tsunami - Rapid Environmental Assessment," highlighting: damage to coastal ecosystems; water and soil contamination; hazardous wastes; infrastructure damage; impact on livelihoods; and indigenous knowledge.

Speakers from Sri Lanka, Maldives, Thailand, India and Indonesia highlighted the damage and loss to property and human lives. They praised UNEP for its immediate action in making an environmental impact assessment and support to these countries. They appealed for the establishment of an early warning system and mobilization of international efforts for rehabilitation.

In the discussion, BANGLADESH, SOMALIA, SWEDEN, NORWAY, YEMEN, TUVALU, CHINA, FINLAND, SUDAN, the LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES and PALESTINE expressed their sympathy and committed their support to the affected countries. Töpfer pledged to cooperate closely with OCHA and other UN agencies in establishing an early warning system and emergency prevention, preparedness and response.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

COOPERATION AND COORDINATION WITHIN THE UN SYSTEM ON ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS:

Monika Linn, Secretary of the Environmental Management Group (EMG) introduced the EMG's report. She outlined the EMG's input into the Bali Strategic Plan, and its future work programme.

The IMO highlighted relevant agreements of importance to GC/GMEF, including: the amendment to the Marpol Convention for the phase-out of single-hull tankers; the protocol for a



supplementary compensatory fund; guidelines for the place of refuge for ships in distress; and the Ballast Water Convention. WMO said it was expanding cooperation with UNEP on the Global Environmental Outlook and on GEF. WHO provided an overview of its collaboration with UNEP on health and the environment, and its contribution to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. UNESCO provided an overview of its key priorities as they relate to UNEP, including early warning and the tsunami response, water, the promotion of cultural diversity, and the decade of education for sustainable development (DESD). He announced the negotiation of an MOU between UNEP and UNESCO on the DESD. UNDP reported on the joint UNDP/UNEP global partnership on poverty and the environment. The UN ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA highlighted its work with UNEP on UN-Water Africa, capacity building with river basin organizations, and the preparation of the African position for CSD-13.

MEA SECRETARIATS: The CBD provided an overview of the key outcomes of COP-7, SBSTTA-11 and ABS-3, highlighting: the draft Programme of Work on Island Biodiversity; work on indicators and subtargets for the 2010 biodiversity target; biodiversity and climate; and the launch of negotiations on an international regime on access and benefit sharing. CITES underscored the importance of synergies, cooperation and the need for continuous information exchange. He noted the expanding role of CITES in the broader areas of conservation, including on the sustainable use of biodiversity. UNEP provided an overview of the arrangements for Stockholm COP-1, identifying several major issues, including the: review process for entries in the register for specific exemptions; financial mechanism and MOU with the GEF; arrangements for the COP on monitoring data on POPs and their transport; rules of procedure; and POPs review committee. The BASEL CONVENTION reported on COP-7's ministerial statement on partnerships for meeting the global waste challenge, underscoring its emphasis on reducing the generation of waste at source, tackling selective waste streams through multistakeholder partnerships, and resource mobilization. She also outlined the Secretariat's work on hazardous waste management in tsunami-affected areas. The CCD highlighted the upcoming COP-7 in Nairobi and the 2006 UN Year of Deserts and Desertification. He said these events allow the international community to rededicate efforts towards lasting solutions of the global problem of desertification. The CMS elaborated on how the protection of habitats that deliver environmental services contribute to the 2010 biodiversity target and the MDGs. The OZONE SECRETARIAT stressed the need for: new technologies for the phase-out of ozone depleting substances; addressing illegal trade; and alternatives to methyl bromide. The MULTILATERAL FUND OF THE MONTREAL PROTOCOL underscored its contribution to ensuring the widest participation of developing countries in the Montreal Protocol, and noted that the Fund is the second largest environment fund in the world and the single largest trust fund in UNEP.

PROVISIONAL AGENDAS AND DATES AND VENUES FOR GCSS-9/GMEF AND GC-24/GMEF: Shafqat Kakakhel, UNEP, introduced a draft decision which contains the draft agenda for GCSS-9/GMEF and GC-24/GMEF (UNEP/GC.23/L.1). He said the agenda for GCSS-9/GMEF has been designed specifically to enable governments to discuss energy issues for CSD-14, as well as chemicals management following the last SAICM PrepCom. Following minor amendments by the EU and Canada to the GCSS-9/GMEF agenda and by UNEP to the GC-24/GMEF agenda, the decision was approved, pending the announcement of the venue for GCSS-9/GMEF.

KEEPING THE WORLD ENVIRONMENT SITUATION UNDER REVIEW: Delegates agreed to delete preambular paragraphs on the GEOSS, and to an amendment on the operative

paragraph welcoming the Executive Director's report on activities and plans for supporting the 10-year implementation plan of the GEOSS. Following amendments by the US, delegates agreed to two new paragraphs tabled by the G-77/China, which address the process for developing the GEO-4 report. Following informal consultations led by Canada, delegates agreed to the paragraph dealing with climate change. They also approved a new paragraph proposed by the US to reference the work of regional and global organizations.

CONTACT GROUPS

Editor's note: ENB coverage of the contact groups ended at 8:30 pm.

CHEMICALS MANAGEMENT: In relation to SAICM, participants discussed text on, among others, the relationship between the International Conference on Chemicals Management and UNEP GC/GMEF meetings to ensure broad participation of developing country participants in both meetings, and the financing of SAICM. Some participants questioned the appropriateness of including a provision on financing in the draft decision, while others stressed the importance of ensuring the adequate provision of funds by UNEP for SAICM. The Secretariat explained that while SAICM has been almost exclusively financed through extra-budgetary funds, UNEP recently provided funding for PrepCom3 for 2005-2006 from the Environment Fund, and it may be appropriate to include the issue in the draft decision.

On mercury, participants deliberated on the draft decision submitted by the CPR (UNEP/GC.23/L.1), and on proposals with new wording presented by: the US; Norway, Switzerland and the EU; and Canada. While the partnership approach received general support, a number of participants said it must remain a complementary strategy, with some noting the need to determine additional measures, including the possibility of adopting a legally-binding instrument on mercury. Noting that for many countries the partnerships resulting from the WSSD have not delivered positive results, developing countries expressed support for the idea of partnerships on mercury insofar as monitoring, transparency, and accountability are ensured. They called for UNEP to take action to ensure these requirements, and proposed that pilot projects be carried out in different regions to test their effectiveness and increase trust in partnerships among developing countries. No agreement was reached on the need for a legally-binding instrument on mercury for the time being. While a number of delegates supported the idea of negotiating such an instrument as a required long-term strategy to reduce risks to human health and the environment from mercury releases, others highlighted the need to fill data and other gaps before such action is undertaken, and the need for concrete actions to address mercury, rather than focusing on negotiating a new treaty.

The G-77/CHINA said that a clear political commitment by all States and the necessary means to implement a legally-binding instrument, which are currently lacking, are indispensable to negotiating such an agreement. Noting that the consideration of possible elements of a legally-binding instrument is a "country issue," the US expressed reservation against a proposal asking UNEP to undertake a study to improve the basis for further action, including an analysis on whether existing legal instruments could adequately address the adverse effects of mercury, and an overview of the possible content of a legally-binding instrument. On the proposal to ask the Secretariat to undertake assessments of other heavy metals of global concern, notably lead and cadmium, the US pointed to resource constraints and said it was unrealistic to carry out such a study. With CANADA, he proposed focusing on the long-range transport effects of such metals, if the assessments were carried out.

PROGRAMME OF WORK AND BUDGET: In considering the draft decision on administrative and other



budgetary matters, delegates approved new text from the EU requesting the Executive Director to explore the possibilities for improving financial information flows between UNEP, UNON and convention secretariats.

Regarding the subprogramme on environmental conventions, delegates continued their consideration of a paragraph on pilot demonstration projects on the implementation of equitable access and benefit-sharing arrangements in relation to several conventions. The US emphasized the importance of retaining the word "equitable" before "access and benefit-sharing," while the G-77/CHINA, MEXICO, the EU, and CANADA preferred its deletion. After a lengthy debate, the US agreed to delete the reference to "equitable." Regarding case studies, many delegates agreed to the EU's proposal mentioning national, subregional and regional experiences.

In considering the draft decision on the Programme of Work and Budget, Chair Renard (Belgium) asked delegates to focus on bracketed paragraphs. Delegates approved two of the EU's proposals, one requesting the Executive Director to provide to the CPR, on a quarterly basis, comprehensive information on all financial "facilities" for UNEP, and another requesting the Executive Director to propose means to address the balance between earmarked and non-earmarked funding. They also approved a paragraph requesting the Executive Director to prepare the budget for the biennium 2008-2009 at the level of \$US130 million.

On the Executive Director's authority to reallocate resources, the EU, NORWAY and the G-77/CHINA supported a 20% reallocation. Noting that 20% is the highest among UN agencies, the US suggested a 7% reallocation.

On a paragraph requesting the Executive Director to increase UNEP's financial reserve to \$US20 million, the US said it would only support it if Executive Director's authority to reallocate resources is reduced to a lower level. In response to a question from Switzerland on the need for the financial reserve, the Secretariat said that it is necessary in the event of insufficient carry-over and late country contributions in the beginning of each fiscal year.

The G-77/CHINA agreed to a EU proposal calling for an increase in the share of the UN regular budget allocated to UNON and UNEP. Opposing this, the US suggested language requesting the UN Secretary-General to keep the UNEP and UNON budgets under review. During the debate, delegates considered an alternative text proposed by the Secretariat, which: reiterates the need for stable, adequate and predictable financial resources for UNEP; underlines the need to reflect all administrative and management costs of the Environment Programme in the UN regular budget; and looks forward to the implementation of the request to the UN Secretary-General to keep UNEP and UNON's financial needs under review.

Debate also centered on the budget for the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan. On a paragraph allowing the Executive Director to exercise his authority to reallocate resources to implement the Plan, the EU, supported by SWITZERLAND, said particular attention should be given to high-priority areas, rather than singling out the Plan, which is not the only high priority for UNEP. The G-77/CHINA preferred a reference to the Plan. NORWAY suggested deleting the paragraph, noting that a previous paragraph had already requested the Executive Director to give the Plan high priority.

On a paragraph requesting the Executive Director to present a report on the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan to GCSS-9/GMEF in 2006, delegates debated on whether in preparing such a report the Executive Director should consult with the CPR, governments or other relevant stakeholders, as well as on whether the report should contain details on the implications for UNEP's Programme of Work and Budget. The G-77/CHINA opposed the references to other relevant stakeholders and implications

for UNEP's Programme of Work and Budget. The EU and NORWAY preferred including such implications in the report. Many delegates suggested a reference to the need to consult with the CPR, and the US proposed consulting with governments and other organizations, following a bottom-up approach.

DRAFTING GROUP: The drafting group conducted a second reading of the draft decision on UNEP's water policy and strategy. Several paragraphs were agreed upon, including language on the 2015 targets of access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. In this and other contexts, the US did not support references to "environmental sustainability." Following a proposal by Brazil to refer to Principle 2 of the Rio Declaration, the EU suggested including Principles 3 and 4, CANADA proposed Principles 10 and 11, and EGYPT suggested Principle 7. Some delegations noted that this enumeration diluted the original purpose of the Brazilian proposal, which focused on the sovereign right of States to exploit their own natural resources.

The language on the "Jeju Initiative" led to a prolonged discussion of its status. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION, supported by the US and NIGERIA, suggested deleting a reference to the work done by the UN Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation. EGYPT proposed language stating that IWRM be tailored to countries' specific circumstances.

Delegates debated the question of whether the GC should "adopt" or "take note of" UNEP's updated water policy and strategy, as well as the timetable for its review and/or revision. While AUSTRALIA suggested specific dates in 2006 for its circulation, EGYPT proposed its presentation at GCSS-9/GMEF, and taking action on it at GC-24/GMEF. NIGERIA also proposed text on developing a sanitation framework. Much of the text of the draft decision on UNEP's water strategy and policy remains bracketed.

In the evening, the drafting group conducted a first reading of the draft decision on IEG, by taking up the preamble, and sections on universal membership, MEAs, and enhanced coordination across the UN system and the EMG.

Several preambular paragraphs were approved. Difficulties arose over the mentioning of "the need for a strengthened institutional structure for IEG." The G-77/CHINA noted that the phrase has not appeared in UNEP documents since Malmö. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION, opposed by MEXICO and BRAZIL, suggested mentioning the promotion of "agreed" environmental policies by UNEP. The G-77/CHINA proposed deleting a reference to "good governance" in the context of capacity building, and the EU suggested alternative language in a separate paragraph. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION questioned a reference to "ongoing consideration of UNEP's governing structure," and the US suggested replacing it with a short reference to the "complex issue" of universal membership.

The drafting group continued its deliberations well into the night.

IN THE CORRIDORS

As the GC approached and passed its mid-week crisis point, delegates were heard wondering whether their human capacities were being stretched to the limit. Thankfully for small delegations, the number of contact groups did not proliferate, though many of them found it difficult to attend or delegate group spokespersons in time for the discussion of specific drafts. In view of the effort put in by members of the Nairobi CPR into developing most of the draft decisions, their presence in overheated negotiating rooms, barring a few exceptions, was little felt. As a participant remarked, one reason for this was the takeover by experts from capitals, which in a number of cases led to repetitious discussion of covered ground.



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SUMMARY REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR RENEWABLE ENERGIES - RENEWABLES 2004: 1-4 JUNE 2004

The International Conference for Renewable Energies (*renewables 2004*) took place from 1-4 June 2004, in Bonn, Germany. Approximately 3600 participants from 154 countries attended the Conference, including several Heads of State, 121 Ministers and representatives from governments, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the scientific community and the private sector.

The *renewables 2004* programme consisted of nine Plenary Sessions, including a Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue and a Ministerial Segment. The Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue addressed: the value of, and opportunities for, renewable energy - policy frameworks and regulatory certainty; and promoting renewable energy - finance and capacity for the future. Other Plenary Sessions addressed best-practice examples and success stories.

The Ministerial Segment included three Ministerial Roundtables that considered policies for renewable energy market development, financing options, and strengthening capacities, research and policy



Members of major groups and delegations in the main plenary room.

developing countries, and the mobilization of financial resources for new and renewable sources of energy. However, it was only following the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) that renewable energy issues began to feature more promi-

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Dr. Heinrich Schneider
Conference Secretariat
International Conference for
Renewable Energies, Bonn 2004

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Langston James “Kimo” Goree VI
212 E 47th St. #21F, New York
NY 10017 USA
Phone: +1 646-536-7556
Fax: +1 646-219-0955
kimo@iisd.org

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