

GCSS-11/GMEF HIGHLIGHTS: THURSDAY, 25 FEBRUARY 2010

In the morning, five parallel ministerial round-table discussions on the green economy took place. In the afternoon, delegates convened for ministerial consultations on biodiversity and ecosystems. The Committee of the Whole (COW) as well as drafting groups on decisions and the Nusa Dua declaration also convened during the day.

MINISTERIAL CONSULTATIONS

Biodiversity and Ecosystems: The session consisted of a panel discussion and was moderated by Hilary Benn, Secretary of State for the Environment, UK. In a keynote address, Henri Njombu, Minister of the Environment, Republic of Congo, stated that the international community needs to learn from its failure to achieve the 2010 biodiversity target to significantly reduce biodiversity loss. He gave recommendations on several key areas, including raising public awareness, and the integration of biodiversity in the economy. He also promoted a new global target to stop biodiversity loss.

On climate change and biodiversity, Juan Rafael Elvira, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Mexico, discussed the issue from the perspective of a megadiverse country. Batilda Burian, Minister of State for Environment, Tanzania, proposed including biodiversity loss in the assessment of the climate change vulnerability of countries.

The EU and others advocated closer coordination among the UNFCCC and CBD, and expressed support for REDD (Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries).

On economic development, Hasan Mahmud, Minister of Environment and Forests, Bangladesh, questioned the notion that economic advancement implies that every family needs a car.

Pavan Sukhdev, UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre, outlined the economics of ecosystems and biodiversity (TEEB) study, a major international initiative to draw attention to the global economic benefits of biodiversity. Many countries highlighted national initiatives for the conservation of biodiversity, and underscored the need to adopt a legally binding agreement on Access and Benefit-sharing (ABS) in October at CBD COP-10 in Nagoya, Japan. There was also general support expressed for an IPBES.

Wangari Maathai, Green Belt Movement, pondering on how "countries very rich in biodiversity could at the same time be very poor," also emphasized that capital could be mobilized with sufficient political will. Kazuhiko Takemoto, Vice Minister for

Global Environmental Affairs, Japan, expressed his country's commitment to providing the appropriate level of contribution to help developing countries achieve the 2010 biodiversity targets.

FARMERS Major Group underscored the importance of farming to ensure adequate food for the world, noting that farmers are the largest ecosystem managers. Jochen Flasbarth, CBD COP President, Germany, observed that the 2010 biodiversity target had not been achieved, noting that agriculture is still the main driver of biodiversity loss.

On an IPBES, Hilary Benn noted that the IPCC findings had been a great motivator for political action, observing that IPBES may provide this for biodiversity and ecosystems. Supporting an IPBES, Izabela Teixeira, Vice Minister for Environment, Brazil, emphasized that such a mechanism would only be effective if premised on a bottom-up approach, with SPAIN noting the need to discuss a model format that would also ensure its independence. Jean-Louis Borloo, State Minister for Ecology and Sustainable Development, France, emphasized the need to establish an IPBES based on the IPCC model. REPUBLIC OF KOREA offered to host the 3rd IPBES meeting.

Flasbarth highlighted the relevance of TEEB for IPBES and, on ABS, said that it was unacceptable not to have a legally binding ABS regime 18 years after the Rio Summit. Juan Rafael Elvira stated the new biodiversity target must be measurable, attainable and profitable.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

ENVIRONMENT IN THE MULTILATERAL SYSTEM:

IEG: Angela Cropper, Deputy Executive Director, UNEP, presented the Executive Director's comments on the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) report (UNEP/GCSS.XI/5). Ivar Baste, Environmental Management Group (EMG), introduced the report of the Group (UNEP/GCSS.XI/3). Juanita Castaño, UNEP, presented the relevant decisions from the 64th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

In the ensuing discussion, many countries lauded the balance established between incremental and broader reforms suggested by the consultative group of ministers or high-level representatives. SWITZERLAND, KENYA and SENEGAL favored the adoption of the identified incremental reform options. The EU said that the GCSS-11/GMEF decision should indicate which matters coming out of the consultative group should go to the UNGA. The US emphasized that all incremental options identified by the group were still options, and it was not prepared to forward them to the UNGA.

Several countries favored a new consultative process to examine measures for broader reform, with ITALY noting this could form an important contribution to preparations for Rio+20.

Many emphasized that the GCSS-11/GMEF decision on IEG should be procedural leaving substantive discussions to the new process.

The RUSSIAN FEDERATION favored putting all options on broader reform before the UNGA. IRAN, INDIA and BRAZIL stressed the IEG discussion must be in the broader context of sustainable development, with INDIA emphasizing that form must follow function.

SWITZERLAND, MEXICO and KENYA said that UNEP should continue to lead the process of strengthening IEG.

KENYA stressed that the IEG discussions should take into account the ability of developing countries to engage in the multiple institutions of environmental governance. SWITZERLAND, KENYA and the RUSSIAN FEDERATION cautioned that the EMG had shifted away from its mandate, and called for it to focus on its core coordinating functions. The EU, MEXICO, CUBA and SENEGAL stressed the importance of strengthening UNEP regional offices.

IPBES: The COW approved the draft decision negotiated by the drafting group (UNEP/GCSS: XI/L.4).

Environmental situation in Haiti: Discussion focused on the extent to which UNEP's efforts in Haiti would fall under the coordination of the UN country team. The COW then approved the draft decision (UNEP/GCSS.XI/CW/CRP.3) with minor amendments.

Environmental law: The Secretariat introduced the draft guidelines for the development of national legislation on access to information, public participation and access to justice in environmental matters (UNEP/GCSS.XI/8) and the draft guidelines for the development of domestic legislation on liability, response action and compensation for damage caused by activities dangerous to the environment (UNEP/GCSS.XI/8/Add.1).

Delegates discussed whether the guidelines should be welcomed or adopted. After discussion in a Friends of the Chair group, delegates agreed to recommend that guidelines be adopted, and approved the draft decisions.

Consultative process on financing options for chemicals and wastes: MEXICO reported that discussion in the Friends of the Chair group on this matter was successful, and summarized the content of the revised draft decision (UNEP/GCSS.XI/CW/CRP.4). He explained that the draft decision contained two additional paragraphs requesting the Secretariat to distribute necessary documentation in a timely fashion, and requesting the Executive Director to take into account and incorporate contributions from governments into the paper on policy options. Delegates approved the draft decision.

Oceans: The Secretariat introduced the sub-item (UNEP/GCSS.XI/L.1). Several countries praised Indonesia for sponsoring the draft decision, and congratulated it on holding the World Ocean Conference 2009 and on the Manado Declaration. The COW approved the draft decision with minor amendments.

Environmental situation in the Gaza Strip: The Secretariat introduced the sub-item on the environmental situation in the Gaza Strip (UNEP/GCSS.XI/L.1, UNEP/GCSS.XI/9, UNEP/GCSS.XI/CW/CRP.5). PALESTINE suggested an amendment, and SAUDI ARABIA, as a GC member, on behalf of the ARAB GROUP, formally proposed it (UNEP/GCSS.XI/CW/CRP.6). Many Arab states expressed their support, while JAPAN expressed concern about the financial implications, and SWITZERLAND said that the GMEF should focus on its mandate. Several delegates said they needed to consult their capitals overnight. Chair Matuszak deferred the item to Friday morning's COW, and encouraged the Secretariat to facilitate informal discussion on the matter.

Delegates also heard a presentation by Peter Gilruth, UNEP, on the UNEP Year Book 2010 (UNEP/GCSS.XI/INF/2).

DRAFTING GROUPS

NUSA DUA DECLARATION: The Drafting Group met throughout the day. With reference to reducing global emissions in order to limit the increase in global temperature to below 2°C, one party argued that this is one of the scientific views, not a consensus target by parties. It therefore objected to text implying that ministers agree to hold the increase in global temperature below 2°C. After intense discussion, parties agreed to text, which recognizes the scientific view as documented by the IPCC fourth assessment report that deep cuts in global emissions are required to hold increase in global temperature below 2°C. Regarding the Copenhagen Accord, two parties opposed text implying that ministers welcome it. Parties agreed to text stating that at the UNFCCC COP-15 and the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, parties took note of the Copenhagen Accord.

The parties reached consensus on text that ministers recognize the importance of enhanced synergies and encourage the COPs of the biodiversity-related MEAs to consider strengthening efforts in this regard. They also agreed on negotiating and reaching an agreement in 2010 on whether to establish an IPBES. Delegates did not reach consensus on the international regime on ABS in 2010 in accordance with a CBD decision, and part of the text on the issue was bracketed.

DRAFT DECISIONS WORKING GROUP: The working group met throughout the day and late evening to consider the draft decision on IEG. The group managed to shorten the text, but a number of issues presented difficulties. Among the major issues were: language on transmitting to the UNGA the set of reform options developed by the Belgrade process; the composition of a new high-level consultative group; new text on the outcome of the ExCOPs and potential future synergies; and whether the Executive Director identifies in full consultation with governments, "including through the Committee of Permanent Representatives," incremental reforms, and integrates them into UNEP's programme of work. The IEG decision was approved by the group, which then took up the EMG decision.

IN THE CORRIDORS

While delegates and Chairs attempted to plow through the heavy agenda within a tight timeframe on Thursday, many applauded the approval of the draft decisions on chemicals financing and environmental law. Others felt that some important contentious issues were festering in the background, predicting a difficult final day. This included the Arab Group's draft decision on the environmental situation in Gaza, on which delegates were compelled to consult capitals. On the Nusa Dua Declaration, delegates debated how to refer to the Copenhagen climate meeting, with many not prepared to compromise on their long-standing commitment to make Copenhagen a success, and therefore preferring a more positive spin in referencing it. Meanwhile, delegates scurried to attend the informal IPCC briefing coming hot on the heels of "Glacierngate" and other alleged IPCC errors, to find out what the briefing would elicit.

As the day drew to a close, hard bargaining continued in the drafting group on IEG. Among the last hurdles to fall was a delegate's objection to the Executive Director consulting with governments "through the Committee of Permanent Representatives" on identifying incremental reform, as suggested by the Belgrade process. The issue was resolved by adding "all" to "governments."

ENB SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS: The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* summary and analysis of the Chemicals ExCOPS and UNEP GCSS-11/GMEF will be available on Monday, 1 March 2010 online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/unepgc/unepss11/>