

SUMMARY OF THE 26TH SESSION OF THE UN ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME GOVERNING COUNCIL/GLOBAL MINISTERIAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM: 21-24 FEBRUARY 2011

The 26th session of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC-26/GMEF) took place from 21-24 February 2011 at the UN Office in Nairobi, Kenya. Over 1000 participants from 140 countries, including ministers, representatives of UN agencies, international organizations, academia, non-governmental organizations, business and industry, and women and youth organizations, attended the four-day gathering.

During the week, delegates convened in plenary sessions, a Committee of the Whole (COW), ministerial consultations and roundtables, a drafting group, and contact groups to consider draft decisions. From Monday to Wednesday, ministerial consultations and roundtables addressed the themes of the green economy and international environmental governance (IEG). The GC-26/GMEF concluded its work by adopting 17 decisions on issues relating to, *inter alia*, chemicals and waste management; the world environment situation; IEG; an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services (IPBES); South-South cooperation; and strengthening international cooperation for environmental crisis response. The GC-26/GMEF also approved the budget and work programme for the 2012-2013 biennium.

As delegates left the room, many expressed satisfaction with the progress made on IEG and understanding the role of the green economy in the sustainable development agenda. Those delegates headed to New York for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD or Rio 2012) PrepCom II noted they had a clearer sense of how to “find the road to Rio.”

A BRIEF HISTORY OF UNEP GC/GMEF

As a result of the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment, the UN General Assembly, in its resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 1972, established UNEP as the central UN node for global environmental cooperation and treaty making. The

resolution also established the UNEP GC to provide a forum for the international community to address major and emerging environmental policy issues. The GC’s responsibilities include the promotion of international environmental cooperation and the recommendation of policies to achieve it, and the provision of policy guidance for the direction and coordination of environmental programmes in the UN system. The GC reports to the UN General Assembly, which also elects the GC’s 58 members for four-year terms, taking into account the principle of equitable regional representation. The GMEF is constituted by the GC as envisaged in GA resolution 53/242. The purpose of the GMEF is to institute, at a high political level, a process for reviewing important and emerging policy issues in the field of the environment.

GCSS-6 /GMEF: The sixth Special Session of the GC/GMEF (GCSS-6/GMEF) took place from 29-31 May 2000, in Malmö, Sweden. Ministers adopted the Malmö Ministerial Declaration, which agreed that the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) should review the requirements for a greatly strengthened institutional structure for IEG.

GC-21/GMEF: This meeting took place from 5-9 February 2001, in Nairobi, Kenya. Delegates established the Open-ended Intergovernmental Group of Ministers or Their Representatives

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This issue of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* © <enb@iisd.org> is written and edited by Kate Neville, Dorothy Wanja Nyingi, Ph.D., Delia Paul, Tanya Rosen, and Andrey Vavilov, Ph.D. The Digital Editor is Tallash Kantai. The Editor is Pamela S. Chasek, Ph.D. <pam@iisd.org>. The Director of IISD Reporting Services is Langston James “Kimo” Goree VI <kimo@iisd.org>. The Sustaining Donors of the *Bulletin* are the Government of the United States of America (through the Department of State Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs), the Government of Canada (through CIDA), the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU), the European Commission (DG-ENV), and the Italian Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea. General Support for the *Bulletin* during 2011 is provided by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Government of Australia, the Ministry of Environment of Sweden, the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, SWAN International, Swiss Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN), the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Japanese Ministry of Environment (through the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies - IGES), the Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (through the Global Industrial and Social Progress Research Institute – GISPRI) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Funding for translation of the *Bulletin* into French has been provided by the Government of France, the Belgium Walloon Region, the Province of Québec, and the International Organization of the Francophone (OIF and IEPF). Funding for translation of the *Bulletin* into Spanish has been provided by the Spanish Ministry of the Environment and Rural and Marine Affairs. The opinions expressed in the *Bulletin* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of IISD or other donors. Excerpts from the *Bulletin* may be used in non-commercial publications with appropriate academic citation. For information on the *Bulletin*, including requests to provide reporting services, contact the Director of IISD Reporting Services at <kimo@iisd.org>, +1-646-536-7556 or 300 East 56th St., 11D, New York, NY 10022, United States of America.

(IGM) to undertake a comprehensive policy-oriented assessment of existing institutional weaknesses, as well as future needs and options for strengthening IEG. They also adopted decision 21/7, which requests the UNEP Executive Director to examine the need for a strategic approach to international chemicals management (SAICM).

GCSS-7/GMEF: This meeting was held from 13-15 February 2002, in Cartagena, Colombia. In its decision SS.VII/1, the GC/GMEF adopted the IGM report, which contains recommendations aimed at strengthening IEG, including through: improved coherence in international environmental policy-making; strengthening the role and financial situation of UNEP; improved coordination among and effectiveness of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs); and capacity building, technology transfer and country-level coordination. Delegates also adopted decisions related to, *inter alia*, SAICM at the global level.

WSSD: The WSSD was held from 26 August-4 September 2002, in Johannesburg, South Africa. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) sets out a framework for action to implement the commitments originally agreed at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. The JPOI, among other things, emphasized that the international community should fully implement the outcomes of decision SS.VII/1 on IEG.

GC-22/GMEF: This meeting took place from 3-7 February 2003, in Nairobi, Kenya. Delegates adopted more than 40 decisions on issues relating to IEG, post-conflict environmental assessment, UNEP's water policy and strategy, SAICM, a mercury programme, support to Africa, production and consumption patterns, and the environment and cultural diversity.

GCSS-8/GMEF: This meeting took place from 29-31 March 2004, in Jeju, Republic of Korea. At the conclusion of the ministerial consultations, delegates adopted the "Jeju Initiative," containing the Chair's summary of the discussions and decisions on: small island developing states; water waste management; regional annexes; and the implementation of decision SS.VII/1 on IEG.

GC-23/GMEF: This meeting took place from 21-25 February 2005, in Nairobi, Kenya. Ministers considered the implementation of internationally agreed development goals, and adopted decisions on, among other things: the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building; IEG; chemicals management; UNEP's water policy and strategy; gender equality and the environment; poverty and the environment; and strengthening environmental emergency response and developing disaster prevention, preparedness, mitigation and early warning systems.

GCSS-9/GMEF: This meeting was held from 7-9 February 2006, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Ministerial consultations addressed, *inter alia*, policy issues relating to energy and environment, chemicals management, and tourism and the environment. The plenary discussions on environmental governance and GC universal membership did not produce an agreed outcome, and delegates decided that the report of the meeting should reflect the divergence of views expressed.

GC-24/GMEF: This meeting convened from 5-9 February 2007, in Nairobi, Kenya. Delegates adopted 15 decisions on issues relating to, *inter alia*: chemicals, including a provision to establish the *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Working Group to Review

and Assess Measures to Address the Global Issue of Mercury; the world environment situation; IEG; South-South cooperation; waste management; 2010-2020 UN Decade for Deserts and the Fight Against Desertification; UNEP's updated water policy and strategy; and support to Africa in environmental management and protection.

GCSS-10/GMEF: This meeting convened from 20-22 February 2008, in the Principality of Monaco. Ministerial consultations addressed the emerging policy issues of mobilizing finance to meet the climate challenge, and IEG and UN reform. The GC/GMEF adopted five decisions on: the UNEP Medium-term Strategy 2010-2013; chemicals management, including mercury and waste management; the Global Environment Outlook; sustainable development of the Arctic region; and the International Decade for Combating Climate Change.

GC-25/GMEF: GC-25/GMEF convened from 16-20 February 2009 in Nairobi, Kenya. The GC/GMEF adopted 17 decisions on issues relating to, *inter alia*: chemicals management, including mercury; the world environment situation; environmental law; IPBES; and the environmental situation in Gaza. Decision 25/4 on IEG established a regionally representative, consultative group of ministers or high-level representatives. The decision requested the group to present a set of options for improving IEG to GCSS-11/GMEF with a view to providing input to the UN General Assembly.

GCSS-11/GMEF: The simultaneous extraordinary Conferences of the Parties (ExCOPs) to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions convened from 22-24 February 2010, in Nusa Dua, Bali, Indonesia, followed by GCSS-11/GMEF, which convened from 24-26 February 2010. The GCSS-11/GMEF concluded its work by adopting eight decisions on: IEG; enhanced coordination across the UN, including the Environment Management Group; a follow-up report on the environmental situation in Gaza; IPBES; strengthening the environmental response in Haiti; oceans; a consultative process on financing options for chemicals and wastes; and environmental law.

REPORT OF THE MEETING

On Monday, delegates convened in plenary for opening remarks. Mwai Kibaki, President of Kenya, called for a continued spirit of collective action at the 26th session of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum and the upcoming UN Conference on Sustainable Development. He also urged nations to support the Green Economy Initiative, adding that developing countries should receive support from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Green Fund to achieve green growth. UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner commended the work already being undertaken in Kenya and other African countries in beginning the transformation to a green economy.

Henri Djombo (Congo), outgoing UNEP GC President, emphasized the need to speak with one voice to signal the importance of a stronger framework for IEG in the context of sustainable development. Jamil Ahmad, UNEP GC Secretary, read a message from UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in which he highlighted the establishment of the High-level Panel on Global Sustainability and its contribution to the intergovernmental process leading up to Rio 2012.

Joan Clos, Executive Director of UN-HABITAT, said that many management measures for climate change must be undertaken at the local level, and require strong local institutions, governments and legislation. Edward Norton, Actor and Goodwill Ambassador for the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), said that developing countries can build new models for development without the impediments of “old infrastructure and old ideas,” citing efforts in countries like Rwanda for watershed protection.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS: During the week, GC-26/GMEF convened in parallel ministerial consultations and the Committee of the Whole (COW). The plenary elected by acclamation Rosa Aguilar Rivero, Minister for Environment, Rural and Marine Affairs, Spain, as GC-26/GMEF President. Other Bureau members elected were: Liana Bratasida (Indonesia), Zoltán Illés (Hungary) and Graciela Muslera (Uruguay), as Vice Presidents; and Mauricio Xerinda (Mozambique) as Rapporteur. Liana Bratasida was also elected Chair of the COW. The plenary adopted the draft agenda without amendment (UNEP/GC.26/1 and Add. 1) and agreed on the GC-26/GMEF’s organization of work.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S POLICY STATEMENT:

On Monday, in his policy statement, UNEP Executive Director Steiner highlighted that while the rate of biodiversity loss was not reversed, several accomplishments showed that the International Year of Biodiversity had ended on a far better note than many had thought, from the green light for the establishment of an Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), to the adoption of the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing to the Convention on Biological Diversity and The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) partnership.

On UNEP’s contribution, he lamented the shortfall in the core Environment Fund, which he indicated would be challenging to overcome. On relationships with Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), he highlighted UNEP’s eagerness to host MEA secretariats but noted that conflicting administrative arrangements need to be addressed and a clearer framework is required. Finally, on IEG, he stressed that Rio 2012 should be “a political project” driven by countries’ leadership rather than by secretariats.

Regina Hess (Germany), Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UNEP (CPR) briefed delegates on the CPR’s process for the preparation of the sixteen draft decisions submitted to the GC.

During the ensuing interventions, Hungary, on behalf of the EU, emphasized the EU’s support for the IEG process, saying that a comprehensive approach is required to address competing policies and financial demands, and to address institutional fragmentation. The US noted that the first Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the US Environmental Protection Agency and UNEP, signed on Monday afternoon, signaled the US government’s commitment to playing a role in areas including green growth, sound science, strong international, national and local governance regimes for law and compliance, and the settlement of environmental disputes.

MINISTERIAL CONSULTATIONS

From Monday to Wednesday, ministers and other heads of delegations met in consultations and roundtables: setting the key ambitions and expected outcomes from Rio 2012 including its preparatory process; a green economy, its perceived risks, expected benefits and enabling conditions for its success; and IEG reform. Key challenges, risks and opportunities were presented and discussed by session panelists and participants.

On Monday, GC-26/GMEF President Rosa Aguilar Rivero explained that panel presentations would focus on the green economy and IEG. Izabella Teixeira, Minister of Environment, Brazil, noted the need to secure new political commitment and find ways to sustain it, stressing that Rio 2012 should not be “an exercise in finger pointing.” Humberto Rosa, Secretary of State for the Environment, Portugal, noted that UNEP is the main vehicle for addressing world environmental problems. Pakistan highlighted the role of UNEP as contributing its technical perspective to the Rio 2012 process and helping clarify the link between the two themes of the ministerial consultations and the identification of implementation gaps. The Russian Federation stressed that Rio 2012 should not be focused on setting new goals but rather on fine-tuning existing efforts.

GREEN ECONOMY: On Monday and Tuesday, delegates heard keynote addresses and discussed the green economy (UNEP GC.26/17/Add.1 and UNEP/GC.26/INF/17) in interactive panels.

On Monday, Sha Zukang, Secretary-General, Rio 2012, acknowledged there are divergent views regarding the concept of the green economy. Elizabeth Thompson (Barbados), Rio 2012 Executive Coordinator, defined the green economy as promoting economic growth while valuing the natural resource base and building social capital. Edna Molewa, Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs, South Africa, noted that a transition to green technologies should take into consideration international financing and trade.

Addressing the argument that a green economy may introduce the risk of new trade barriers, UNEP Executive Director Steiner said the issue was not unique to the green economy, and the question should be how to minimize the risk of misuse of new economic instruments. Guatemala suggested focusing on practical outcomes of the green economy rather than its definition. Argentina said that transition to a green economy should not end in “green protectionism” or policies representing veiled trade restrictions.

Describing his country’s efforts on the environment, Kenyan Prime Minister Raila Odinga stressed several messages, saying that developing country concerns about green economy-related barriers to trade are legitimate and that GMEF deliberations must identify and address them.

On Tuesday, Janez Potočnik, European Commissioner for the Environment, emphasized that Rio 2012 provides an opportunity to accelerate progress towards the green economy and proposed endorsement of a framework to develop coherent policies for resources. Pavan Sukhdev, UNEP, presented the Green Economy Report, noting its aim of countering “myths and misconceptions” about the economics of greening.

In a panel discussion moderated by Sherry Ayittey, Minister of Environment, Science and Technology, Ghana, panelist Denis Kellman, Acting Minister of the Environment, Water Resources

and Drainage, Barbados, highlighted efforts to strengthen regulatory regimes, engage local communities and embed sustainability in public finance strategies. Jung-Ho Moon, Vice-Minister for Environment, Republic of Korea, outlined Korea's policies, institutions and visions for low-carbon green growth. Robert Watson, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, UK, highlighted that although concrete definitions of a green economy might be restrictive, a common understanding of the concept is needed to maximize opportunities.

Singapore encouraged focusing on practical implementation strategies for, rather than definitions of, a green economy, while Iran stressed the need for international consensus on the definition of the green economy. Hungary, on behalf of the EU, emphasized the potential of the green economy for trade, services and job creation. South Africa warned that the green economy should not be used to impose conditionalities and trade barriers. Venezuela added concerns over potential political and social consequences of the green economy.

On the long-term consequences of failing to implement a green economy, Norway stressed that these would include environmental degradation and no economic growth or poverty reduction. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) expressed the view that effective participation of civil society is essential for a successful transition to a green and equitable economy.

Ministerial Roundtable: Discussions on the green economy continued in four ministerial roundtables. Participants discussed, among other things: social equity in economic transitions; mechanisms for technology and knowledge transfers; examples of national level policy strategies to promote renewable energy and other environmental innovation; and definitions of the green economy.

Niger emphasized the importance of equity in the implementation of a green economy, and Saudi Arabia recommended mobilizing incentives from financial institutions to fund research and innovation. Offering examples of national experiences in the green economy, the Russian Federation outlined its climate doctrine and energy strategy aimed at promoting a low-carbon economy, and Denmark described its environmental policies and support for environmental innovation. Pakistan asked whether the green economy is a reaffirmation of the Rio principles. Italy highlighted the need for a global transition to an economic system that supports sustainable development, noting that the current economic model is unlikely to assist countries in achieving multiple goals on issues such as water, food security and climate change. The US noted that a green economy should accommodate short-term job and growth needs, which he said are politically pressing issues.

INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL

GOVERNANCE: On Wednesday, GC-26/GMEF President Aguilar Rivero opened the session on IEG (UNEP GC. 26/17/Add.2), noting GC-26/GMEF Vice-President Muslera (Uruguay) would preside.

John Njoroge Michuki, Minister of Environment, Kenya, stressed that the GC should recommend that the UN General Assembly agree on the need for a new form of IEG. Paula Lehtomaki, Minister of Environment, Finland, and Co-Chair of the Consultative Group of Ministers on IEG reform, encouraged the GC to endorse the Nairobi-Helsinki Outcome. Norbert

Röttgen, Minister for Environment and Nuclear Safety, Germany, on behalf of the EU, stressed the need for reforms in the UN system.

In the ensuing panel discussion, moderated by UNEP Executive Director Steiner, Henri Djombo, Minister of Forestry and Environment, Congo, proposed formulating concrete proposals to guide nations' decisions on IEG. Carlos Castaño, Vice-Minister of Environment, Colombia, emphasized that more clarity is needed on the role of the environment pillar in sustainable development. Kerri-Ann Jones, Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, US, noted that the environment is the weakest pillar of sustainable development, and that greater political will, not the change of an organization, is required.

On the participation of civil society, Jan Kubiš, Executive Secretary, UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), highlighted the UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) as a successful example of enabling civil society participation. Maria Ivanova, Civil Society Advisory Group on IEG, proposed talking in terms of global environmental governance, which encompasses the participation of civil society.

Hungary, on behalf of the EU, supported reforms in UNEP to form a new agency and France called for a world environment organization. The Russian Federation said it was premature to transform UNEP into a specialized agency. Iran expressed support for strengthening UNEP in its current form, with improved funding. New Zealand proposed supporting existing mechanisms to fill gaps in the current architecture. Guatemala and Mexico emphasized that IEG should be streamlined and UNEP strengthened. Japan said that the problem of current IEG is the slow response to environmental degradation.

Local Authorities emphasized the need to make decisions about natural resources at local levels and called for re-designing relationships with civil society.

Ministerial Roundtable: On Wednesday afternoon, discussions on IEG continued in four ministerial roundtables. Issues discussed included: the integration of a strengthened IEG system in a reformed institutional framework for sustainable development; the role of IEG in achieving sustainable development at the national level; enhancing UNEP; and creating a world environment organization and a new umbrella organization for sustainable development.

Italy said that there is no competition between IEG and the framework for sustainable development, and called for incremental and system-wide changes in IEG. Australia suggested that "form should follow function" and asked whether some UNEP activities should change, in view of the existing UNEP mandate. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Secretariat proposed that GC membership be extended to all UN members. The US noted its disagreement with the nature of some proposed IEG reforms and underlined that reforming the environmental pillar of sustainable development depends on national priorities. Opposing a new environment organization, Côte d'Ivoire, Chad and India reiterated the need to strengthen

UNEP. Djibouti noted that some of the positions taken by African countries on IEG were not consistent with those of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment.

PRESIDENT'S SUMMARY: On Thursday, GC President Aguilar Rivero introduced, and delegates approved, the 13-page President's Summary of the ministerial consultations (UNEP/GC.26/L.5). She emphasized that the Summary reflects common areas of interest outlined in the interactive dialogues and roundtables, and underscored that it does not reflect consensus.

The Summary highlights that:

- Rio 2012 needs to produce an assessment and stocktaking as to why many of the commitments of the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development as well as the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development were not realized to their full potential;
- The green economy needs to be seen in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and as one of the means to achieve sustainable development;
- How a country implements a green economy will depend on its specific natural resources and capacities;
- There are numerous success stories where a green economy transition is successfully taking place at the national level and countries can learn from the success of others;
- Elements that were mentioned as important in a transition towards a green economy included coordination, technology development and diffusion, technology transfer, capacity building, and additional financial resources;
- A significant number of countries expressed their concerns about trade barriers and the implications for international trade;
- On IEG, the challenge for the UNEP GC is about moving the conversation beyond the common diagnosis of the problem and beginning to articulate a forward-looking consensus on reform objectives;
- IEG provides a bridge between the green economy and the institutional framework for sustainable development;
- Reform is needed at the national level and development will not be sustainable unless governments invest in science and innovation, and enhance resilience and human capacity;
- Environmental governance is determined by national priorities and the strength of the environmental and social pillars in the UN system reflects the priorities that governments have placed on these issues;
- Local and regional authorities are critical in implementation of agreed national commitments; and
- Strengthening UNEP alone may not be enough, and options for broader reform proposed in the Nairobi-Helsinki Outcome must be further developed.

While acknowledging that the summary reflects a balanced report of concerns expressed by countries, Cuba asked to go on record as not sharing the view of the majority in favor of a transition to a green economy. Venezuela expressed concern that not enough information was provided, especially with regard to the green economy, and noted that the conceptual debate needs to be taken further. He asked that his reservation on the UNEP report on the green economy be recorded for the record.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

The COW, chaired by Liana Bratasida (Indonesia) met Monday through Thursday. The drafting group on IEG, established by the COW, met Tuesday and Wednesday. The COW also established a working group on the budget and programme of work, chaired by Regine Hess (Germany), which met Tuesday through Thursday, and a working group on chemicals management, co-chaired by Vladimir Lenev (Russian Federation) and John Roberts (UK), which met Tuesday through Thursday.

INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL

GOVERNANCE: In the COW on Monday, the Secretariat introduced the documents on IEG (UNEP/GC.26/3, UNEP/GC.26/18, UNEP/GC.26/INF/19, UNEP/GC.26/INF/23 and UNEP/GC.26/L.1). India supported strengthening IEG through UNEP and Switzerland said that the IEG process should continue under UNEP, while Norway said the process may benefit from an institution with a broader mandate than UNEP.

On Tuesday, delegates continued discussions on IEG. Japan and Brazil said the high-level expert group on IEG should seek feedback from governments. The US expressed concerns about inadequate discussions on incremental reforms and, with the Russian Federation, Iran, Argentina and Egypt, opposed the creation of a UN Environment Organization (UNEO). Colombia, Serbia, Australia and Belgium, on behalf of the EU, supported a "highly strengthened" IEG structure. Senegal said a political compromise is needed to provide concrete proposals for the Rio 2012 preparatory process. The drafting group on the draft decision on IEG (UNEP/GC.26/L.1) met throughout the day and into the night, completing its work mid-day on Wednesday.

On Thursday, the COW considered a draft decision approved by the drafting group (UNEP/GC.26/CW/L.4/Add.1). Cuba proposed amendments to the text, including replacing "welcomes" with "takes note of" the Helsinki-Nairobi Outcome. Hungary, on behalf of the EU, explained the text was the product of lengthy drafting group discussions, and represented a number of compromises by all parties. Recognizing the difficulties and concerns of delegations that were unable to participate in the drafting group's discussions, Mexico and Brazil also emphasized efforts to find compromise text. Chair Bratasida suggested convening an informal group to consider the options, but Cuba preferred negotiating the draft decision in the COW. Discussions were suspended, and following the lunch break, the COW reconvened and approved the drafting group's text.

Final Decision: On IEG (UNEP/GC.26/L.4/Add.1) the GC:

- welcomes the results of the consultative group as contained in the outcome document of the consultative group's meetings, known as the "Nairobi-Helsinki Outcome";
- takes note of the report of the Executive Director on the implementation of incremental changes identified in the set of options and requests the Executive Director, in consultation with the CPR, to submit a draft decision for consideration by the GC/GMEF at its 12th special session on those incremental improvements requiring a GC decision, as indicated in that report;
- invites the President of the GC to transmit the Nairobi-Helsinki Outcome to the Preparatory Committee for the UNCSD at its second session and to the General Assembly at its 66th session;

- invites the PrepCom for the UNCSA in its consideration of the institutional framework for sustainable development to consider the options for broader institutional reform identified in the Nairobi-Helsinki Outcome, as a contribution to strengthening the institutional framework for sustainable development by improving IEG;
- also invites the PrepCom of the UNCSA at its second session to initiate a full analysis of the financial, structural and legal implications and comparative advantages of the options identified in the Nairobi-Helsinki Outcome utilizing the expertise of relevant UN system entities, including UNEP and relevant stakeholders and major groups eligible to participate in the PrepCom;
- requests the Executive Director, in cooperation with other interested UN entities and with extra-budgetary resources, to organize informal meetings in New York for governmental representatives on the Nairobi-Helsinki Outcome in the context of discussions on the international framework for sustainable development;
- also requests the Executive Director to provide a report on progress in the implementation of the present decision to the GC/GMEF in its 12th special session, in 2012; and
- decides to assess the progress achieved on IEG at the 12th special session of the GC/GMEF in 2012.

STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT: Sustainable

consumption and production: In the COW on Tuesday, the Secretariat introduced the relevant documents (UNEP/GC.26/7, UNEP/GC.26/7/Add.1, UNEP/GC.26/INF/16, and UNEP/GC.26/L.1) on a draft decision seeking a mandate to adopt the 10-year framework programme (10YFP) at the 19th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD 19). The US supported adoption of the draft decision without amendment. Israel and Japan recommended that UNEP continue to harness the expertise of states. Panama said that a reference to strengthening linkages among programmes required clarity on how these would be achieved. Nicaragua and Fiji called for more emphasis on technology transfer.

On Wednesday, COW Chair Bratasida presented the amended draft decision on the 10YFP (UNEP/GC.26/CW/CRP.5). Delegates agreed on the need to avoid pre-judging the outcomes of future discussions on the 10YFP, but differed on which details would be overly prescriptive. Panama, Brazil and Hungary, on behalf of the EU, agreed to compromise text from the US, supported by Switzerland, retaining reference to “appropriate” institutional arrangements. Proposals from Brazil and the US that the framework be “action-oriented,” “concise” and “practical” were accepted by delegates. Switzerland supported Norway’s text referring to UNEP as a lead agency on the 10YFP, but differing views were expressed by others.

In a late-night session on Wednesday, the COW discussed and adopted the amended draft decision. Guatemala, supported by Hungary, for the EU, emphasized the importance of presenting the 10YFP for adoption at CSD 19, rather than deferring this decision to Rio 2012.

Final Decision: In its final decision (UNEP/GC.26/L.4) on the 10YFP on sustainable consumption and production, the GC:

- invites the Executive Director to build upon and strengthen UNEP’s existing activities and initiatives in promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns;

- supports the development of a concise, ambitious, practical and action-oriented 10YFP;
- invites the CSD to finalize and adopt a 10YFP at CSD 19; and
- recognizes that the 10YFP could be an important input into the preparatory process for Rio 2012.

In the decision, the GC requests the Executive Director, *inter alia*, to ensure that UNEP continues to play an active and co-leading role in the development of a 10YFP, and to offer to take a lead role in its implementation.

World environment situation: On Tuesday afternoon, the Secretariat, in introducing the relevant documents (UNEP/GC.26/4, UNEP/GC.26/4/Add.1, UNEP/GC.26/INF/2, UNEP/GC.26/INF/13, UNEP/GC.26/INF/20 and UNEP/GC.26/L.1), highlighted the establishment of UNEP-Live, a web-based platform to organize and access data as a basis for periodic assessments. Cuba requested removal of references to the UN “Delivering As One” Initiative and, with Argentina, to the Copenhagen climate change agreement. On the fifth edition of the Global Environment Outlook (GEO-5), Norway and the US remarked on its underfunding, and Switzerland called for a chapter on policy. Kenya requested increased capacity building for the generation of policy-relevant scientific data.

On Thursday, delegates considered a draft decision approved by the drafting group on the world environment situation (UNEP/GC.26/CW/L.4/Add.2). The COW approved the draft decision.

Final Decision: In the final decision (UNEP/GC.26/L.4), the GC calls upon governments to promote the use of impacts of integrated environmental assessments in policy processes to strengthen the scientific basis of environmental management and awareness raising. The GC also calls upon the Executive Director to promote coherence of assessments through the application of consistent and appropriate methodologies to enhance their impact, and to strengthen the capacities of countries.

On future assessment of environmental change over 2012-2013, the GC requests:

- the Executive Director to: continue to conduct comprehensive, integrated and scientifically credible global and thematic environmental assessments on environmental change worldwide to support decision-making; and engage all relevant stakeholders in conducting integrated global and thematic environmental assessments; and
- governments to follow up on the work initiated by the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and provide extra-budgetary resources for technical cooperation and capacity building to support assessment initiatives.

On the international assessment landscape, the GC requests the Executive Director to:

- strengthen assistance to developing countries; and
- initiate discussions with the UN Office of Legal Affairs Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea regarding the potential role of UNEP in providing technical and scientific support to the first cycle of the regular process for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment.

On UNEP-Live the GC calls upon:

- the Executive Director to mobilize partnerships and institutional and technical networks for its development, and to work with countries and relevant regional and thematic

networks on a set of priority environmental data and indicators; and

- governments to engage in the development of the pilot UNEP-Live platform and available data, information and indicators on priority environmental issues.

Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services:

On Tuesday, the Secretariat introduced documents UNEP/GC.26/6 and UNEP/GC.26/L.1 on IPBES. India, Israel, Switzerland, Norway, Kenya and the US expressed strong support for the establishment of an IPBES, and Japan requested that the first meeting of the platform be held as soon as possible. The UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) declared its interest in hosting or co-hosting the secretariat. Egypt and Cuba emphasized that the UN General Assembly resolution did not establish an IPBES, and that a plenary meeting should decide that the “final modalities of an IPBES” be endorsed at the UN General Assembly this year.

On Thursday, delegates considered a draft decision approved by the drafting group on IPBES (UNEP/GC.26/CW/L.4). The Secretariat noted that the draft decision on IPBES had been re-issued in light of errors, with the new document denoted with an asterisk. The COW approved the draft decision.

Final Decision: In its final decision (UNEP/GC.26/L.4/Add.1) on the IPBES, the Governing Council, *inter alia*, recalls its main functions and responsibilities, including promoting the contribution of the relevant international scientific and other professional communities to the acquisition, assessment and exchange of environmental knowledge and information within the UN system. The GC recognizes the need to strengthen and improve the science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services for human well-being through the establishment of a science-policy platform.

In operative paragraphs, among other things, the GC endorses the outcomes of the third and final *ad hoc* intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder meeting on IPBES and decides, without prejudice to the final institutional arrangements for the IPBES, to convene a plenary meeting to determine modalities and institutional arrangements for the platform at the earliest opportunity. The GC requests the UNEP Executive Director to convene this plenary meeting in 2011 in cooperation with UNESCO, the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The GC also invites the Executive Director to submit an offer of interest to signify the interest of UNEP to host or otherwise support the secretariat of the IPBES.

South-South Cooperation, Oceans, Status of

Environmental Treaties: On Tuesday afternoon, delegates discussed this agenda item (UNEP/GC.26/9, UNEP/GC.26/INF/14, UNEP/GC.26/10, UNEP/GC.26/INF/8 and UNEP/GC.26/L.1). Argentina said precautions should be taken to ensure that projects intended to protect coastal systems do not impact negatively on marine food chains. Hungary, for the EU, underlined the importance of ecosystem-based policies.

On Wednesday morning, the CBD Secretariat clarified that the CBD Conference of the Parties had welcomed but not yet adopted the Multi-Year Plan of Action for South-South Cooperation on Biodiversity for Development. In the evening, the COW considered the draft decision on South-South cooperation on biodiversity for development (UNEP/GC.26/CW/

CRP.3). Canada, supported by Hungary on behalf of the EU, said language to welcome the finalization of the Multi-Year Plan of Action was premature, and that parties should instead “look forward” to its finalization.

Final Decisions: On organizing the third intergovernmental review meeting of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (IGR3-GPA) (UNEP/GC.26/L.4), the GC requests:

- governments and international and regional financial institutions to support developing countries in implementing marine and coastal initiatives; and
- the Executive Director: to support the expert workshop on the role of marine and coastal biodiversity and ecosystems in adaptation to and mitigation of climate change impacts; and to organize IGR3-GPA.

On promoting South-South cooperation on biodiversity for development (UNEP/GC.26/L.4), the GC encourages:

- member states and other governments, UN agencies and others to contribute further to the development of the Multi-Year Plan of Action for South-South Cooperation; and
- the Executive Director to report to GC-27/GMEF on the contributions of UNEP to promoting South-South cooperation.

Global Environment Monitoring System Water

Programme (GEMS): On Wednesday, the US presented an amended version of the draft decision on GEMS (UNEP/GC.26/L.1), based on consultations with Canada and Hungary, on behalf of the EU. Delegates agreed to the draft decision with amendments on, *inter alia*, the encouragement of cooperation at the regional level to enhance water-monitoring systems at the global level.

Final Decision: On GEMS (UNEP/GC.26/L.4), the GC requests the Executive Director to, *inter alia*:

- facilitate the further development of GEMS to ensure the programme provides scientifically credible water quality data that meets the needs of the UN; and
- strengthen capacity to enhance monitoring programmes and analytical, assessment and research activities for integrated water resource management in developing countries.

The GC also requests governments and other organizations to participate actively in the GEMS Water Programme by contributing water quality data and information, and provide financial and in-kind support to the GEMS Water Programme, capacity building, and transfer of technology efforts in developing countries.

Chemicals and Waste Management: On Monday, the COW considered a number of documents and draft decisions related to chemicals and waste management, and agreed to convene a working group to consider them (UNEP/GC.26/5/Rev.1, UNEP/GC.26/5/Rev.1/Add.1, UNEP/GC.26/INF/11, UNEP/GC.26/INF/11/Add.1-5, UNEP/GC.26/INF/12, UNEP/GC.26/8, UNEP/GC.26/11, UNEP/GC.26/11/Add.1, UNEP/GC.26/16 and UNEP/GC.26/L.1). Nigeria, speaking for the African Group, discussed a draft decision on lead and cadmium (UNEP/GC.26/CW/CRP.2), calling for partnerships to ensure public awareness.

The Secretariat presented five draft decisions (UNEP/GC.26/L.1) on: chemicals management, including mercury; waste management; a consultative process on financing options for chemicals and wastes; enhancing cooperation and coordination within the chemicals and wastes cluster; and

e-waste problems. In discussions, Switzerland emphasized the importance of securing financing for the sustainable management of chemicals and waste. Denmark, for the EU, underlined that decisions on e-wastes should be combined with those on waste management.

On Tuesday afternoon, the contact group on chemicals and waste reported to the COW on their progress, saying that consensus had been reached on a merged draft decision on chemical and electronic wastes, and on a draft decision on lead and cadmium.

On Wednesday, Chair Bratasida introduced the draft decisions agreed to by the working group on chemicals management (UNEP/GC.26/CW/L.2), on the consultative process on financing options for chemicals and wastes and on enhancing cooperation and coordination within the chemicals and wastes cluster, which were both approved by the COW.

On Thursday, Chair Bratasida introduced the final draft decisions from the working group on chemicals and waste management (UNEP/GC.26/CW/L.2/Add.1). The COW approved the draft decisions, with proposed amendments from Nigeria, on behalf of the African Group, on implementation issues, including amendments on the establishment of a common baseline of knowledge on waste management and assessment of the current status of guidelines and instruments to tackle e-waste in developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

Final Decisions: The GC adopted three decisions on chemicals and waste management. The decision on chemicals and waste management (UNEP/GC.26/L.4/Add.1) has five sections on: lead and cadmium; mercury; implementation of SAICM; waste management, including management of electrical and electronic waste; and final provisions.

On lead and cadmium, the GC, among other things:

- requests the Executive Director to: continue promoting and facilitating work related to the Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles and the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead in Paints; continue activities on lead and cadmium; and to initiate a partnership on lead and cadmium in cooperation with governments, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and NGOs; and
- urges measures by governments and private entities to promote the environmentally sound management of products, wastes and contaminated sites containing lead and cadmium.

On mercury, the GC reaffirms the mandate for the

Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to prepare a global legally binding instrument on mercury, and, among other things:

- urges governments and others to continue to support and contribute to the Global Mercury Partnership; and
- requests the Executive Director, in the context of the Global Mercury Partnership, to take actions to strengthen the capacities of developing countries and countries with economies in transition on national inventories of mercury.

On the implementation of SAICM, the GC, *inter alia*:

- welcomes the outcomes of the second session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM-2), the progress made in implementing SAICM and efforts to enhance the engagement of the health sector in the implementation of the Strategic Approach;

- urges UNEP to continue to implement the Strategic Approach; and
- urges governments, IGOs, NGOs and others to contribute financially and in kind to the implementation of the Strategic Approach, including in support of the Quick Start Programme and the Strategic Approach secretariat.

On waste management, including management of electrical and electronic waste, the GC requests the Executive Director to, among other things:

- provide further assistance to developing countries and countries with economies in transition for developing and strengthening implementation of an integrated waste management approach; and
- provide more intensive capacity-building and demonstration projects aimed at optimizing waste prevention, the recycling and recovery of waste and the efficient use of resources and materials at the local level.

The GC also, *inter alia*, calls upon governments to consider waste prevention and improving waste management, including in the field of e-waste, as central objectives when adopting and developing national sustainable development strategies.

In the final provisions, the GC requests the Executive Director to present progress reports on the implementation of the decision to GC-27/GMEF and, in relation to SAICM, to the 12th special session of the GC/GMEF (GCSS-12/GMEF), and to submit input on chemicals and waste management as part of UNEP's contribution to the PrepCom for Rio 2012.

In the decision on enhancing cooperation and coordination within the chemicals and wastes cluster (UNEP/GC.26/L.4), the GC, among other things:

- underlines the need for a chemicals and waste management approach that responds to new and emerging issues and challenges in an effective, efficient, coherent and coordinated manner;
- requests the Executive Director to work with the secretariats of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions and the SAICM and other stakeholders in efforts to enhance cooperation and coordination for the chemicals and wastes-related agenda;
- invites countries that have not ratified the MEAs on chemicals and wastes to do so as a contribution to enhancing cooperation and coordination within the chemicals and wastes cluster; and
- requests the Executive Director to facilitate and support an inclusive, country-driven, consultative process on the challenges to and options for further enhancing long-term cooperation and coordination in the chemicals and wastes cluster.

In the decision on the consultative process on financing options for chemicals and wastes (UNEP/GC.26/L.4), the GC recalls the need for heightened efforts to increase the political priority accorded to the sound management of chemicals and wastes and the increased need for sustainable, predictable, adequate and accessible financing for the chemicals and wastes agenda. The GC, *inter alia*, acknowledges progress made and work carried out by UNEP regarding the consultative process and requests UNEP to continue supporting the process.

BUDGET AND PROGRAMME OF WORK: In the COW on Tuesday, the Secretariat introduced the budget and programme of work for 2012-2013, Environment Fund and

other budgetary matters (UNEP/GC.26/13, UNEP/GC.26/13/Add.1, UNEP/GC.26/14/Rev.2, UNEP/GC.26/INF/6, UNEP/GC.26/INF/6/Add.1, UNEP/GC.26/INF/7, UNEP/GC.26/INF/21/Rev.1 and UNEP/GC.26/L.1), highlighting provisions for the six cross-cutting thematic priorities of UNEP and steps to implement efficiency measures including reduction in the travel budget, and delaying of recruitment to fill vacant positions.

The US and Japan requested UNEP to adjust its work programme in case of budget shortfalls, while Switzerland called on states falling below the agreed scale to increase their contributions.

On Wednesday, COW Chair Bratasida presented two draft decisions approved by the working group, (UNEP/GC.26/CW/L.3).

Final Decisions: In the decision on the budget and biennial programme of work for 2012-2013 (UNEP/GC.26/L.4), the GC approved appropriations for the Environment Fund of US\$190.962 million divided among six programmes: climate change; disasters and conflicts; ecosystem management; environmental governance; harmful substances and hazardous waste; and resource efficiency and sustainable consumption and production.

The GC requested, *inter alia*:

- allocating a maximum of USD\$122,310 million to post costs, and increase in allocations from Environment Fund resources to non-post costs;
- continuing the shift in emphasis from delivery of outputs to achievement of results, and merging of progress reporting on administrative and budgetary matters with programme performance reporting;
- reviewing the needs and potential of UNEP's regional offices in mainstreaming their environmental priorities and maintaining UNEP's presence at national and regional levels; and
- developing a medium-term strategy for the period 2014-2017.

In the decision on management of trust funds and earmarked contributions (UNEP/GC.26/L.4), the GC noted and approved the establishment of new technical cooperation trust funds, general trust funds as well as new trust funds in support of the regional seas programmes, conventions, protocols and special funds.

COORDINATION AND COOPERATION WITHIN THE UN SYSTEM ON ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS:

On Tuesday, the Secretariat presented documents on: coordination and cooperation within the UN system on environmental matters with regards to GEF instruments; implementation of MOUs between UNEP and UNDP and between UNEP and other UN agencies; joint progress report with UN-HABITAT; and the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) report on the environmental profile of the UN organizations and their in-house environmental management policies and practices (UNEP/GC.26/12, UNEP/GC.26/INF/15, UNEP/GC.26/15, UNEP/GC.26/INF/9, UNEP/GC.26/INF/9/Add.1, UNEP/GC.26/INF/10, UNEP/GC.26/INF/22 and UNEP/GC.26/L.1).

Japan requested the JIU report be shared with non-UN agencies. On Wednesday, Norway promoted the Poverty-Environment Initiative between UNEP and UNDP as a model for UN interagency collaboration.

Final Decision: In its decision (UNEP/GC.26/L.4), the GC amended arrangements for the GEF, in view of the Executive Director's report (UNEP/GC.26/12) and supporting material (UNEP/GC/INF/15), to serve as a financial mechanism for the UN Convention to Combat Desertification and to allow the appointment of the CEO/Chair of the GEF to serve for four years, with the possibility of re-appointment for another four-year term.

COORDINATION AND COOPERATION WITH MAJOR GROUPS:

In the COW on Wednesday, the Secretariat briefed delegates on coordination and cooperation with major groups and stakeholders (UNEP/GC.26/INF/5 and UNEP/GC.26/INF/19). In the document on statements and recommendations from major groups and stakeholders to the GC/GMEF (UNEP/GC.26/INF/5), major groups and stakeholders from Africa, Europe, North America, Asia-Pacific, West Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean provided input on topics including IEG, the green economy, sustainable consumption and production, and preparations for Rio 2012. In the document on inputs from major groups and stakeholders on IEG (UNEP/GC.26/INF/19), the Civil Society Advisory Group on IEG offered input on: rethinking and strengthening multilateralism; the need for both a stronger environment programme and for integration of the environment into all other programmes; the importance of stronger IEG for developing countries; and the combination of both incremental and fundamental reform in a plan for systematic structural change.

STRENGTHENING INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS RESPONSE:

On Monday and Wednesday, Switzerland introduced drafts of a decision on environmental emergency response (UNEP/GC.26/L.1 and UNEP/GC.26/L.2).

In the COW on Wednesday, Indonesia requested the addition of text to ensure national sovereignty and territorial integrity, while the US proposed adding "preparedness" to emergency response. Brazil and Cuba opposed the inclusion of post-crisis recovery, reconstruction and peace-building in environmental emergency response, due to security-related sensitivities. The US, Guatemala and Hungary, on behalf of the EU, emphasized links between humanitarian action and post-crisis recovery and reconstruction, but agreed to its deletion.

Final Decision: In its decision (UNEP/GC.26/L.4), the GC requests UNEP to:

- work with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to identify current roles, responsibilities and divisions of labor between international organizations involved in responding to environmental emergencies, and to monitor and evaluate the risks of potential natural and man-made disasters;
- through UNEP's disasters and conflicts sub-programme, strengthen UN response mechanisms for the coordination and mobilization of international assistance for environmental risks and impacts from natural and man-made disasters; and
- promote the mainstreaming of environment in humanitarian response planning.

ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT: On Wednesday afternoon, delegates considered this item (UNEP/GC.26/6, UNEP/GC.26/11, UNEP/GC.26/11/Add.1 and UNEP/GC.26/16).

Final Decision: On enhanced coordination across the UN system (UNEP/GC.26/L.4 decision 4), the GC requests the Environment Management Group to promote coherence in programming environmental activities in the UN system, and continue supporting the implementation of the UN climate-neutral strategy and advancing the sustainability of policies, management practices and operations in the UN system.

FOLLOW-UP TO AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OUTCOMES OF THE UN SUMMITS AND MAJOR INTERGOVERNMENTAL MEETINGS: On Wednesday afternoon, the Secretariat briefed delegates on outcomes of UN summits including decisions of the GC (UNEP/GC.26/7, UNEP/GC.26/7/Add.1, UNEP/GC.26/INF/16, UNEP/GC.26/12, UNEP/GC.26/INF/15, UNEP/GC.26/INF/3 and UNEP/GC.26/INF/4), highlighting resolutions of the UN General Assembly in which governments had requested UNEP to “fully operationalize” an IPBES and convene a meeting to determine institutional arrangements and modalities for IPBES, contribute to Rio 2012 and coordinate UN activities for the Decade for Biodiversity.

PROVISIONAL AGENDAS, DATES AND VENUES: On Thursday, delegates approved in the COW the draft decision on the provisional agendas, dates and venues for the GCSS-12/GMEF and GC-27/GMEF (UNEP/GC.26/CW/CRP.6).

Final Decision: In the decision (UNEP/GC.26/L.1), the GC decides to hold GCSS-12/GMEF on 20-22 February 2012 at a location to be determined, and GC-27/GMEF in Nairobi on 18-22 February 2013.

OMNIBUS DECISION ON REPORTS BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: On Thursday, the Secretariat introduced the draft decisions approved by the COW (UNEP/GC.26/L.4). The US noted that the adoption of the omnibus decision on reports of the Executive Director was unnecessary.

Final Decision: In the decision (UNEP/GC.26/L.1), the GC requests the Executive Director to continue to strengthen results-based management in UNEP and, wherever possible, to provide an account of relevant activities in a results-based report to the GC on the implementation of the programmes of work and budgets.

OTHER MATTERS

REPORT OF THE COW: On Thursday, in plenary, COW Rapporteur István Teplán (Hungary) presented the draft report of COW (UNEP/GC.26/CW/L.1, UNEP/GC.26/CW/L.1/Add.1 and UNEP/GC.26/CW/L.1/Add.2). Japan, Hungary, on behalf of the EU, and Nigeria, on behalf of the African Group, proposed amendments and insertions to the report. Commenting on outstanding incomplete sections, the US said that delegations would not have enough time to review the documents prior to plenary and suggested the draft report should be forwarded to the CPR for review and final approval.

CLOSING PLENARY

The closing plenary convened on Friday at 5:30 pm. Brazil highlighted that the three pillars of sustainable development cannot be considered in isolation and that environment and sustainable development are intertwined. She noted a green economy is a means of achieving sustainable development. Hungary, on behalf of the EU, said that GC-26/GMEF was a success, noting the large number of useful decisions and its contribution to the Rio 2012 agenda, and the recognition of

balance of operational decisions and policy discussion. He emphasized that upgrading UNEP can contribute to achieving the goal of strengthening the environmental pillar of sustainable development.

Jamaica and Barbados said discussions on the green economy and IEG were enlightening and commended UNEP’s role in catalyzing discussions. Mexico recognized the milestones achieved in discussions on chemicals and IPBES. The Russian Federation noted that, regardless of varying positions on IEG and green economy, the meeting was successful in providing guidance for Rio 2012. The US declared its satisfaction with the consensus achieved on a range of important issues. He said the US will support IPBES, and was pleased with the “positive spirit” regarding IEG.

India cautioned that the green economy should take account of the realities of poverty and, on IEG, said that drastic re-engineering of the existing apparatus would be counter-productive, and an incremental approach would be more constructive. Switzerland announced its contribution of US\$300,000 to the Trust Fund for Environmental Emergencies, noting that disaster risk reduction is crucial for protecting progress made towards the Millennium Development Goals.

Colombia said that Rio 2012 should go “over and beyond a simple policy statement” and should come up with real mandates. The Solomon Islands, referring to marine ecosystem concerns, called on delegates to “keep the green economy blue.”

In closing, GC President Aguilar Rivero and UNEP Executive Director Steiner congratulated delegates for their active participation, “immensely constructive spirit” and for moving sustainable development towards a greener future. The meeting was gavelled to a close at 6:44 pm.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF GC-26/GMEF

While the 26th session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC-26/GMEF) occurred against a bleak background—tight money in the aftermath of the world financial crisis, a spate of natural disasters and political upheavals in some regions, driving up the price of oil—delegates arrived in Nairobi ready to focus on what many considered to be an additional preparatory meeting for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio 2012). For many, this session marked an opportunity to build on UNEP’s capacities and solidify its vital role in sustainable development.

Although GC-26/GMEF was only a four-day session, its impact is likely to be felt across the UN system in the months to come. Governments succeeded in negotiating a number of long-pending decisions, many of which will bear directly on preparations for Rio 2012. Delegates approved a new budget and programme of work for 2012-2013. They agreed to develop institutional arrangements for the ground-breaking intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services (IPBES), with some holding out hope that UNEP would host the secretariat. Ministers gave the green light to further pioneering work by UNEP on environmental assessments. Decisions on chemicals and waste management and on sustainable consumption and production, among others, will propel UNEP’s work in these areas. While delegates had mixed feelings about the waste-saving “paperless” mode of

the otherwise well-organized Governing Council, and some suggested that the session was over-burdened with prolonged “ministerial consultations,” at the expense of time badly needed for negotiating concrete decisions, most agreed that the final outcome was robust.

Many of the discussions at the Governing Council will be picked up at the Rio 2012 PrepCom in New York in March, and many expect that the results of GC-26/GMEF will have an impact and UNEP’s role will be pivotal. This brief analysis will look at the significance of GC-26/GMEF from this perspective.

GREEN ECONOMY

Although the green economy was not intended to be the subject of a specific GC-26/GMEF decision, it was an overarching theme of the ministerial discussions. In fact, it became an important part of a balance struck between operational decisions and policy discussions. The idea of a green economy is now receiving near-universal support, and was abundantly clarified in UNEP’s detailed new Green Economy Report and in UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner’s and Rio 2012 Secretary-General Sha Zukang’s passionate interventions. Many delegates cautioned against regarding the green economy as “a sinister plot” against developing countries, insisting that it is a tool to accelerate sustainable development, the eradication of poverty and achieving food security. They urged a radical rethinking and shift from the present misallocation of resources to investing in natural capital. Several ministers stressed that the green economy will bring balance and better coherence to the three pillars of sustainable development.

The debates confirmed, however, that some doubts and questions persist, especially among developing countries. These lingering worries concern the definition of the concept itself, its perceived benefits, possible social consequences, like job losses, the risk of “green protectionism,” and more importantly, the need to identify sources of finance for green investment, capacity building and technology transfer. In the eyes of many participants, the transition from a “philosophical debate” on the advantages of the green economy to a discussion of national and regional implementation on the ground is the biggest challenge.

INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE

As expected, international environmental governance (IEG), the second big theme of the Governing Council and one that is closely related to the Rio 2012 agenda, remained contentious. The discussions on the form of a new intergovernmental body for the environment continue to be heavily politicized, and it was debated with both forceful and ingenious arguments from both sides of the divide. A frustrated delegate thought the debate was “so polarized over form” that a serious analysis of the actual function of a future organization seemed to be lost.

The EU, Switzerland and several others tried hard to advance the proposal for a new strong and independent environmental agency based on UNEP. They evoked the unwieldy proliferation of multilateral environmental agreements and negotiation processes, and the need for synergies and greater accountability. Some even suggested that achieving sustainable development would be impossible without a complete overhaul of the environmental governance architecture.

This thesis met with opposition from traditional quarters—the US, China and Russia—supported by some key developing

countries, including India and Argentina. They argued that a centralized body would be unwieldy and inflexible, and would de-emphasize countries’ obligations under specific treaties. Indeed, as some participants indicated, UNEP is already strengthening its international role without any drastic transformation in structure.

GC-26/GMEF did not succeed in dispelling these differences, and doubts and suspicions persist. Some delegates mused that the unwillingness to erect new global structures for environment and sustainable development lay in the fears of weakening the present UN structure, with its privileged status for the few. Others wondered what “strengthening” UNEP actually meant. A larger mandate? More financing? “Why would a world environment organization suddenly produce new money?” wondered an exasperated delegate. Another seriously questioned whether, as part of strengthening UNEP, the suggestion to invite all UN member states to become members of the Governing Council was a sensible choice, given the expense involved and the trend in multilateral negotiations to make decisions in smaller fora.

At the end of the session, the “opponents” seemed to be pleased that they succeeded in blocking “radical” language in the decision on IEG, such as direct reference to the option of a new environment organization. But the “proponents” were convinced it was they who succeeded, because the issue will be kept afloat. At least for the time being, it will not be shuttled back and forth between UNEP and the UN General Assembly, as it has been for over a decade. Instead, the GC, in its decision on IEG, has requested Rio 2012 Preparatory Committee to initiate a deep analysis of all the implications of the various reform options from the Nairobi-Helsinki consultative group outcome.

Admittedly, this was an inconclusive result. There is no guarantee that these long-standing divisions will be erased by the Rio 2012 conference. It is hard to imagine, as a delegate observed, that the EU, especially Germany and France, would agree to purely incremental changes in the environmental architecture, and forsake the chance to upgrade UNEP. Some believe that for any progress to be made additional high-level efforts outside of the UN process will be necessary in the coming months. Whether the problem is resolved before the Conference or ends in another stalemate, one thing is certain: the IEG issue is now part of the agenda of Rio 2012.

NOT JUST A WHISTLE-STOP

There was all-around agreement that GC-26/GMEF was an important station on the road to Rio. As delegates left Gigiri on Thursday night, many remarked that in the run-up to 2012, GC-26/GMEF provided governments and ministers with abundant opportunities to compare notes and solidify potential areas of compromise on both of the Rio agenda items—the green economy within the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and the institutional framework for sustainable development. UNEP’s role in trying to integrate the various contributions of the UN family and stakeholders will continue to influence the Rio preparatory process.

While the future Rio outcome is still blurry and uncertain, corridor discussions of some of UNEP’s proposals indicated that delegates may be able to support their inclusion in the outcome, including further developing the Strategic Approach

to International Chemicals Management, a world information network, a global Aarhus-type convention on access to environmental information, decision-making and justice, and an organization to address sustainable consumption and production.

However, as one participant noted, Rio 2012 embraces the sweeping landscape of sustainable development, while UNEP's purview remains the environment, and the preparatory process is coordinated from New York, not Nairobi, and involves many UN agencies. Nevertheless, the GC/GMEF's policy discussions, especially on the green economy, may have served to bring the economic and environmental pillars closer together, and signaled that UNEP's engagement and role can help to integrate all three pillars of sustainable development—environmental, economic and social. UNEP's mission in the months to come will be building on the consensus developed at GC-26/GMEF and solidifying its influence on the outcome at Rio 2012.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting for CSD 19:

This meeting will prepare for the policy-year session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, which will negotiate policy options related to the thematic cluster for the CSD 18-19 cycle: transport, chemicals, waste management, mining and the Ten-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production. **dates:** 28 February-4 March 2011 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UN Division for Sustainable Development **phone:** +1-212-963-8102 **fax:** +1-212-963-4260 **email:** dsd@un.org **www:** http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/csd/csd_csd19_ipm.shtml

UNCSD PrepCom II: This meeting will convene in preparation for the UNCSD. **dates:** 7-8 March 2011 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UNCSD Secretariat **phone:** +1-212-963-1267 **email:** uncsd2012@un.org **www:** <http://www.uncsd2012.org>

CIF Partnership Forum: The Climate Investment Funds (CIF) Partnership Forum will discuss the CIF, a pair of financing instruments designed to support low-carbon and climate-resilient development through scaled-up financing channeled through major development banks. **dates:** 14-18 March 2011 **location:** Tunis, Tunisia **contact:** CIF Administration Unit **phone:** +1-202-458-1801 **email:** CIFAdminUnit@worldbank.org **www:** http://www.climateinvestmentfunds.org/cif/partnership_forum_2011_home

ITPGR GB 4: The fourth session of the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture will address, among others, compliance, implementation issues regarding the Treaty's Multilateral System, and the outstanding financial rules. **dates:** 14-18 March 2011 **location:** Bali, Indonesia **phone:** +39-06-570-53441 **fax:** +39-06-570-56347 **email:** pgrfa-treaty@fao.org **www:** <http://www.planttreaty.org/>

Eighth session of the Implementation and Compliance Committee of the Basel Convention: This meeting will address implementation and compliance issues under the Basel Convention. **dates:** 21-23 March 2011 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **contact:** Secretariat of the Basel Convention **phone:** +41-22-917-8218 **fax:** +41-22-797-3454 **email:** sbc@unep.org **www:** <http://www.basel.int/meetings/meetings.html>

Ninth Conference of the Parties to the Abidjan

Convention: The Convention for Cooperation in the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the West and Central African Region (Abidjan Convention) will convene its 9th COP to debate and make decisions on issues that are relevant to the wise use of marine and coastal resources from Mauritania to South Africa. **dates:** 28 March - 1 April 2011 **location:** Accra, Ghana **contact:** Abou Bamba, Regional Coordinator, Abidjan Convention Secretariat **phone:** +225-02-718-781 **www:** http://www.unep.org/AbidjanConvention/Meetings_and_Events/COP9/index.asp

Seventh Meeting of the Rotterdam Convention Chemical Review Committee:

This meeting will review chemicals for inclusion under the Rotterdam Convention. **dates:** 28 March - 1 April 2011 **location:** Rome, Italy **contact:** Rotterdam Convention Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-8296 **fax:** +41-22-917-8082 **email:** pic@pic.int **www:** <http://www.pic.int/>

International Workshop on Hazardous Substances within the Life Cycle of Electronic and Electrical Products: This international workshop, jointly organized by the Basel Convention, UNIDO, and the Stockholm Convention Secretariat, will address the issue of the fate and sound management of chemicals during the life-cycle of electrical and electronic equipment and products along the supply chain. **dates:** 29-31 March 2011 **location:** Vienna, Austria **contact:** Secretariat of the Basel Convention **phone:** +41-22-917-8218 **fax:** +41-22-797-3454 **email:** sbc@unep.org **www:** <http://www.basel.int/meetings/wrks-eew-unido/index.html>

UN Climate Change Conference – Bangkok: These meetings are the first formal round of climate change negotiations in 2011 and include: the 16th session of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP 16); the 14th session of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention (AWG-LCA 14); and workshops pursuant to the Cancun Agreements and to other decisions, as appropriate. **dates:** 3-8 April 2011 **location:** Bangkok, Thailand **contact:** UNFCCC Secretariat **phone:** 49-228-815-1000 **fax:** 49-228-815-1999 **email:** secretariat@unfccc.int **www:** http://unfccc.int/meetings/intersessional/bangkok_11/items/5887.php

1st Assembly of IRENA: During the first assembly of the International Renewable Energy Agency, the statutory organs will replace the preparatory committee, and member states will work to define their renewable energy strategies. The meeting will be preceded by a one-day meeting of the Preparatory Commission on 3 April. **dates:** 4-5 April 2011 **location:** Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates **contact:** IRENA Interim Headquarters **phone:** +971-241-79062 **email:** <http://www.irena.org/contact/index.aspx?mnu=cont> **www:** <http://www.irena.org/>

LDC-IV Preparatory Committee: This meeting is the second session of the Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee for the Fourth UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC-IV). **dates:** 4-8 April 2011 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** Margherita Musollino-Berg, OHRLLS **phone:** +1-212-963-4844 **email:** musollino@un.org **www:** <http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/ldc/home>

Fourth African regional meeting on the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) and UNITAR/OECD workshop on Nanotechnology and

Manufactured Nanomaterials: The SAICM secretariat, in collaboration with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), is organizing an African regional meeting on SAICM and a UNITAR/OECD workshop on nanotechnology and nanomaterials. **dates:** 5-8 April 2011 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **contact:** Mohammed Omotola, SAICM Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-8334 **fax:** +41-22-797-3460 **email:** muhammed.omotola@unep.org **www:** <http://www.saicm.org>

Nineteenth Meeting of the CITES Plants Committee: The CITES Plants Committee will meet to review, *inter alia*, non-detriment findings, timber issues and plant species included in the CITES appendices. **dates:** 18-21 April 2011 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **contact:** CITES Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-81-39/40 **fax:** +41-22-797-3417 **email:** info@cites.org **www:** <http://www.cites.org/eng/com/PC/index.shtml>

CSD 19: This policy-year session will negotiate policy options related to the thematic cluster for the CSD 18-19 cycle: transport, chemicals, waste management, mining and the Ten-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production. **dates:** 2-13 May 2011 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UN Division for Sustainable Development **phone:** +1-212-963-8102 **fax:** +1-212-963-4260 **email:** dsd@un.org **www:** http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/csd/csd_csd19.shtml

Fourth UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries: This conference aims to assess the results of the ten-year action plan adopted at the third UN Conference on LDCs and to adopt new measures and strategies for their sustainable development. **dates:** 9-13 May 2011 **location:** Istanbul, Turkey **contact:** Cinthya Marquez, Secretariat **phone:** +1-917-367-4509 **email:** marquez1@un.org **www:** <http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/ldc/home>

IPCC 33: The 33rd session of the International Panel on Climate Change will meet to assess progress towards the fifth assessment report and to accept the Special Report on Renewable Energy Sources and Climate Change Mitigation. **dates:** 10-13 May 2011 **location:** Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates **phone:** +41-22-730-8208/54/84 **fax:** +41-22-730-8025/13 **email:** IPCC-sec@wmo.int **www:** <http://www.ipcc.ch/>

Meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group on Marine Biodiversity Beyond Areas of National Jurisdiction: This meeting of the *Ad hoc* Open-ended Informal Working Group to study issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction is convened in accordance with General Assembly resolution 65/37. **dates:** 31 May - 3 June 2011 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UN Division for Oceans Affairs and the Law of the Sea **phone:** +1-212-963-3962 **fax:** +1-212-963-5847 **email:** doalos@un.org **www:** <http://www.un.org/Depts/los/biodiversityworkinggroup/biodiversityworkinggroup.htm>

1st Meeting of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Committee for the Nagoya Protocol on ABS (ICNP-1): This meeting will address the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

dates: 6-10 June 2011 **location:** Montreal, Canada **contact:** CBD Secretariat **phone:** +1-514-288-2220 **fax:** +1-514-288-6588 **email:** secretariat@cbd.int **www:** <http://www.cbd.int/abs/>

UNFCCC Subsidiary Bodies June 2011: The 34th sessions of the UNFCCC Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) and Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) will take place in June 2011, along with meetings of the Ad Hoc Working Groups. **dates:** 6-17 June 2011 **location:** Bonn, Germany **contact:** UNFCCC Secretariat **phone:** +49-228-815-1000 **fax:** +49-228-815-1999 **email:** secretariat@unfccc.int **www:** http://unfccc.int/meetings/unfccc_calendar/items/2655.php?year=2011

12th Meeting of the Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea: This meeting is convened in accordance with General Assembly resolution 65/37, paragraph 228. **dates:** 20-24 June 2011 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UN Division for Oceans Affairs and the Law of the Sea **phone:** +1-212-963-3962 **fax:** +1-212-963-5847 **email:** doalos@un.org **www:** http://www.un.org/Depts/los/consultative_process/consultative_process.htm

Fifth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention: This convention, focused on promoting shared responsibility and cooperative efforts among parties in the international trade of certain hazardous chemicals to protect human health and the environment, will convene its fifth meeting of the conference of the parties. **dates:** 20-24 June 2011 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **contact:** Rotterdam Convention Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-8296 **fax:** +41-22-917-8082 **email:** pic@pic.int **www:** <http://www.pic.int>

25th Meeting of the CITES Animals Committee: The CITES Animals Committee will address, among other things, the review of significant trade in specimens of Appendix II species and a review of animal species in the CITES appendices. **dates:** 18-22 July 2011 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **contact:** CITES Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-81-39/40 **fax:** +41-22-797-3417 **email:** info@cites.org **www:** <http://www.cites.org/eng/com/AC/index.shtml>

31st Meeting of the Open-ended Working Group of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer: The Montreal Protocol will convene the 31st meeting of its open-ended working group. **dates:** 1-5 August 2011 **location:** Bangkok, Thailand **contact:** Ozone Secretariat **phone:** +254-20-762-3851/3611 **fax:** +254-20-762-46 91/92/93 **email:** ozoneinfo@unep.org **www:** <http://ozone.unep.org/Events/meetings2011.shtml>

CITES SC 61: The 61st meeting of the CITES Standing Committee is organized by the CITES Secretariat. **dates:** 15-19 August 2011 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **contact:** CITES Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-81-39/40 **fax:** +41-22-797-3417 **email:** info@cites.org **www:** <http://www.cites.org/eng/news/calendar.shtml>

Intersessional Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group of the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM OEWG): This meeting will act as a preparatory meeting for the Third International Conference on Chemicals Management. **dates:** 29 August - 2 September 2011 **location:** Belgrade, Serbia **contact:** SAICM Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-8532 **fax:** +41-22-797-3460 **email:** saicm@chemicals.unep.ch **www:** <http://www.saicm.org>

World Conference on Marine Biodiversity: This meeting, focused on the theme “Our Oceans, Our Future,” will bring together scientists, practitioners and the public to consider biodiversity in the marine environment. **dates:** 26-30 September 2011 **location:** Aberdeen, Scotland **phone:** +44-1224-272523 **fax:** +44-1224-272319 **email:** marine-biodiversity@abdn.ac.uk **www:** <http://www.marine-biodiversity.org/>

UNCCD COP 10: The tenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 10) to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) will take place in October 2011. **dates:** 10-21 October 2011 **location:** Changwon City, Republic of Korea **contact:** UNCCD Secretariat **phone:** +49-228-815-2800 **fax:** +49-228-815-2898 **email:** secretariat@unccd.int **www:** <http://www.unccd.int/>

Tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention: This meeting will address a new strategic framework for the Basel Convention, among other issues. **dates:** 17-21 October 2011 **location:** Cartagena, Colombia **contact:** Basel Convention Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-8212 **fax:** +41-22-797-3454 **email:** sbc@unep.org **www:** <http://www.basel.int/meetings/meetings.html>

Third Session of the INC to Prepare a Global Legally Binding Instrument on Mercury: This meeting is scheduled to be the third of five Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) meetings to negotiate a legally binding instrument on mercury. **dates:** 30 October - 4 November 2011 **location:** Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso **phone:** +41-22-917-8183 **fax:** +41-22-797-3460 **email:** mercury@chemicals.unep.ch **www:** <http://www.chem.unep.ch/mercury/>

Second Intersessional Meeting for the UNCS D: The aim of the meeting is to hold “focused substantive discussions to advance the subject matter of the Conference.” **dates:** 14-16 November 2011 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UNCS D Secretariat **phone:** +1-212-963-1267 **email:** uncsd2012@un.org **www:** <http://www.uncsd2012.org/>

Joint 9th Conference of the Parties to the Vienna Convention and 23rd Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol: The 9th Vienna Convention COP and 23rd Montreal Protocol MOP will convene jointly to discuss issues related to the control of substances that deplete the ozone layer. **dates:** 14-18 November 2011 **location:** Bali, Indonesia **contact:** Ozone Secretariat **phone:** +254-20-762-3851/3611 **fax:** +254-20-762-46 91/92/93 **email:** ozoneinfo@unep.org **www:** <http://ozone.unep.org/Events/meetings2011.shtml>

CMS COP 10: The 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species will be preceded by the 17th meeting of the Scientific Council (17-18 November), the 38th meeting of the Standing Committee (19 November) and the first Meeting of the Signatories to the Bukhara Deer MoU (19 November). It will be followed by the first Meeting of Signatories to the Andean Flamingo MoU (26 November), the second Meeting of the Parties to the Gorilla Agreement (26-27 November) and the seventh meeting of the Standing Committee of the African Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) (26-27 November). **dates:** 20-25 November 2011 **location:** Bergen, Norway **contact:** UNEP/CMS Secretariat **phone:** +49-228-815-2426 **fax:** +49-228-815-2449 **email:** secretariat@cms.int **www:** <http://www.cms.int/news/events.htm>

UNFCCC COP 17 & COP/MOP 7: The 17th meeting of the COP to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the 7th meeting of the COP/MOP to the Kyoto Protocol will take place in Durban, South Africa. **dates:** 28 November - 9 December 2011 **location:** Durban, South Africa **contact:** UNFCCC Secretariat **phone:** +49-228-815-1000 **fax:** +49-228-815-1999 **email:** secretariat@unfccc.int **www:** <http://unfccc.int/>

Eye on Earth Summit: The purpose of the Summit is focus attention of the areas of environmental information networking and information access through multistakeholder collaboration in order to keep the world environmental situation under review. **dates:** 12-15 December 2011 **location:** Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates **contact:** Gerard Cunningham, UNEP **email:** gerard.cunningham@unep.org or eoe@ead.ae **www:** http://hqweb.unep.org/civil-society/Portals/59/Documents/Greenroom/events/Eye_On_Earth_Summit_GC-26_Briefing.pdf

GCSS-12/GMEF: The 12th special session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum will take place in 2012. **dates:** 20-22 February 2012 **location:** to be determined **contact:** Secretary, UNEP Governing Council **phone:** +254-20-762-3431 **fax:** +254-20- 762-3929 **email:** jamil.ahmad@unep.org **www:** <http://www.unep.org/>

GLOSSARY

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| 10YFP | 10-year framework programme on sustainable consumption and production |
| CBD | Convention on Biological Diversity |
| COP | Conference of the Parties |
| COW | Committee of the Whole |
| CPR | Committee of Permanent Representatives |
| CSD | Commission on Sustainable Development |
| GC/GMEF | UNEP Governing Council/Global Environment Ministerial Forum |
| GCSS/GMEF | Special Session of the UNEP GC/GMEF |
| GEF | Global Environment Facility |
| GEMS | Global Environment Monitoring System Water Programme |
| IEG | International environmental governance |
| IGM | Open-ended intergovernmental group of ministers or their representatives |
| IGR3-GPA | Third intergovernmental review meeting of the global programme of action for the protection of the marine environment from land-based activities |
| IPBES | Intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services |
| JIU | Joint Inspection Unit |
| MEA | Multilateral environmental agreement |
| Rio 2012 | UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCS D) |
| SAICM | Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management |
| UNCS D | UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio 2012) |
| UNEP | United Nations Environment Programme |