ITTA, 1994 RENEGOTIATION HIGHLIGHTS: THURSDAY, 26 JANUARY 2006

The UN Conference on the Negotiation of the Successor Agreement to the International Tropical Timber Agreement, 1994 (ITTA, 1994), Fourth Part has managed to achieve consensus on all but one remaining issue. During the morning, Producer and Consumer Groups caucused in adjacent rooms, then met in an afternoon contact group session. Follow a brief break, President Paranhos moved to a smaller meeting with key Producer and Consumer delegates in an attempt to break an impasse on the Administrative Account.

AFTERNOON CONTACT GROUP

As an apparent result of closed meetings of Consumer members in the morning, a working group chair presented the President’s text on five articles at an afternoon contact group session. Finalizing the article on Definitions, delegates did not express opposition to the proposal that “special vote” is one requiring at least 60% (as opposed to “two-thirds”) of the votes of Producers and 60% of those of Consumers, cast by those present and voting.

Delegates approved the article on Membership by Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs) by deleting the whole paragraph on the competence of the EC from this article.

The article on Distribution of Votes was also approved after delegates accepted the text which: grants ten votes, rather than either five or 15, to each Consumer; removes the suggested cap on the proportionality of a blocking minority; and provides that the Council may, by special vote, adjust the minimum percentage required for a Special Vote by Consumer members if it deems necessary.

On Signature, Ratification, Acceptance and Approval, the contact group approved without change the text proposed by the EC for the third paragraph, which reads, in part, “the EC or any IGOs. . .shall deposit a declaration issued by the appropriate authority of such Organization specifying the nature and extent of its competence over matters governed by this Agreement.” Similar language was deleted from the article on Membership in the Organization, and delegates accepted this arrangement without discussion.

The article on the Administrative Account was reopened during the afternoon contact group session. At stake is the issue: the proportion of the assessed contributions to the Administrative Account allocated to basic administrative costs such as salaries and benefits, versus that allocated to operational costs such as communication and outreach, expert meetings, and publication of studies.

It appeared that some delegates were dissatisfied with the compromise text that most had accepted on Wednesday, 25 January, calling for a reduction of 30% of the administrative “costs,” rather than “Account.” This was an ironclad agreement on Paranhos’ text, only a tentative acceptance of the text as a possible basis for final agreement. Delegates approved the article by a vote of 27.5% cap after intense late-night discussions on the budget on Wednesday, 25 January, 27 January. The contact group accepted the Secretariat’s suggestion that the proposed sub-paragraph remain unchanged, in bold, in the text to be distributed at plenary. The Chair requested, but was unable to get, full consensus on whether the only remaining question for plenary address would be whether to accept that text as written or not.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Exhausted delegates went back to work early Thursday, 26 January 2006, convening in closed Consumer and Producer caucuses. The latter ended early with most delegates quite relaxed and ready to move on. A number of Producer delegates noted that, for a change, recent delays have been the result of Consumers being unable to achieve group cohesion on particular issues, as timely for the ITTA-4. Some delegates noted the problem areas center around the lack of consensus within usually more cohesive groups. Remarkably, however, little or no mention of conflicts with the US were heard.

It appears that there was general disagreement over whether late-night discussions on the budget on Wednesday, 25 January, had in fact resulted in a closed text, and when a previously deleted concept was reintroduced, arguments erupted about how this may have violated a fragile agreement.

Some delegates pointed out, however, that there never was an ironclad agreement on Paranhos’ text, only a tentative acceptance of the text as a possible basis for final agreement. Notably, numerous participants appear to be resigned to a lack of full consensus on the final Agreement, as was the case for the ITTA, 1994. The implications of this now, however, may be more far-reaching for the ITTA, 2006.

ENB SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS: The Earth Negotiations Bulletin summary and analysis of the ITTA, 1994 Renegotiations will be available on Monday, 30 January 2006 online at: http://www.iisd.ca/forestry/itta4/
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The International Conference for Renewable Energies (renewables 2004) took place from 1-4 June 2004, in Bonn, Germany. Approximately 3600 participants from 154 countries attended the Conference, including several Heads of State, 121 Ministers and representatives from governments, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the scientific community and the private sector.

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

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

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

This product was developed in 2003 specifically for large conferences that include both substantive discussions and side events. Building on the success of the Earth Negotiations Bulletin and ENB on the Side, “Your Meeting” Bulletin was created as a conference daily report. IISD Reporting Services was hired to publish in this format at the World Forestry Congress, Renewables 2004 and the IUCN World Conservation Congress.

“Your Meeting” Bulletin is a 4-6 page daily report and summary issue that includes coverage of policy discussions and/or negotiations, and extensive reporting from side events and special events during the conference.

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