

## SUMMARY OF THE FIRST PREPCOM FOR THE UN CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: 17-19 MAY 2010

The first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) convened from 17-19 May 2010, at UN Headquarters in New York. The Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) took up both substantive and procedural matters. On the substantive side, delegates assessed progress to date and the remaining gaps in implementing outcomes of major summits on sustainable development. They also discussed new and emerging challenges, a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and the institutional framework for sustainable development. On the procedural side, participants met in contact groups to organize their work in the lead up to 2012, and to consider the UNCSD's rules of procedure. As delegates left UN Headquarters after 9:00 pm on the third and final day, most seemed satisfied that the PrepCom had provided some clarity on way forward, highlighted key challenges, and charted a "roadmap" for the preparatory process over the next two years.

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF UN ENVIRONMENTAL CONFERENCES

On 24 December 2009, the UN General Assembly adopted resolution 64/236 agreeing to hold the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) in 2012 in Brazil. The UNCSD will mark the 40th anniversary of the first major international political conference specifically having the word "environment" in its title, the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, which met in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1972. The UNCSD will also mark the 20th anniversary of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), which met in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992.

The UNCSD will seek to secure renewed political commitment for sustainable development, assess the progress and implementation gaps in meeting previously-agreed commitments, and address new and emerging challenges. The focus of the Conference will include the following themes to be discussed and refined during the preparatory process: a green

economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication; and the institutional framework for sustainable development. Resolution 64/236 also called for holding three Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) meetings prior to UNCSD.

On 14 May 2010, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon announced the appointment of UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs Sha Zukang as Secretary-General for the "Rio+20" Conference.

**UN CONFERENCE ON THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT:** The Stockholm Conference was held from 5-16 June 1972, and produced three major sets of decisions. The first decision was the Stockholm Declaration. The second was the Stockholm Action Plan, made up of 109 recommendations on international measures against environmental degradation for governments and international organizations. The third set of decisions was a group of five resolutions calling for: a ban on

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nuclear weapons tests; the creation of an international databank on environmental data; addressing actions linked to development and environment; creation of an environment fund; and establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme as the central node for global environmental cooperation and treaty-making.

**WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT:** In 1983, the UN General Assembly decided to establish an independent commission to formulate a long-term agenda for action. Over the next three years the Commission—more commonly known as the Brundtland Commission after its chair, Gro Harlem Brundtland—held public hearings and studied the issues. Its report, *Our Common Future*, which was published in 1987, stressed the need for development strategies in all countries that recognized the limits of the ecosystem's ability to regenerate itself and absorb waste products. The Commission emphasized the link between economic development and environmental issues, and identified poverty eradication as a necessary and fundamental requirement for environmentally sustainable development.

**UN CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT:** UNCED, also known as the "Earth Summit," was held from 3-14 June 1992, and involved over 100 Heads of State and Government, representatives from 178 countries, and some 17,000 participants. The principal outputs of UNCED were the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, Agenda 21 (a 40-chapter programme of action), and the Statement of Forest Principles. The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) were also opened for signature during the Earth Summit.

Chapter 38 of Agenda 21 called for the creation of a Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) to: ensure effective follow-up to UNCED; enhance international cooperation and rationalize intergovernmental decision making; and examine progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 at all levels. In 1992, the 47th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) set out, in resolution 47/191, the CSD's terms of reference, composition, guidelines for NGO participation, organization of work, relationship with other UN bodies, and Secretariat arrangements. The CSD held its first meeting in June 1993 and has met annually since.

**UNGASS-19:** Also at its 47th session in 1992, the UNGA adopted Resolution 47/190, which called for a Special Session of the UNGA (UNGASS) to review implementation of Agenda 21 five years after UNCED. The 19th Special Session of the UNGA for the Overall Review and Appraisal of Agenda 21 (23-27 June 1997, New York) adopted the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 (A/RES/S-19/2). It assessed progress since UNCED, examined implementation, and established the CSD's work programme for the period 1998-2002.

**WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:** The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) met from 26 August – 4 September 2002, in Johannesburg, South Africa. The WSSD's goal, according to UNGA resolution 55/199, was to hold a ten-year review of UNCED at the Summit level to reinvigorate the

global commitment to sustainable development. The WSSD gathered over 21,000 participants from 191 governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, the private sector, civil society, academia and the scientific community. The WSSD negotiated and adopted two main documents: the Plan of Implementation and the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development.

The Plan of Implementation is designed as a framework for action to implement the commitments originally agreed at UNCED and includes eleven chapters: an introduction; poverty eradication; consumption and production; the natural resource base; health; small island developing states (SIDS); Africa; other regional initiatives; means of implementation; and institutional framework. The Johannesburg Declaration outlines the path taken from UNCED to the WSSD, highlights challenges, expresses a commitment to sustainable development, underscores the importance of multilateralism and emphasizes the need for implementation.

### PREPCOM I REPORT

Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Sha Zukang, who is also serving as UNCSD Secretary-General, opened the first session of the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) on Monday, 17 May 2010. He explained that UNCSD will seek to secure renewed political commitment to sustainable development, assess the progress and implementation gaps in meeting already agreed commitments, and address new and emerging challenges.

Delegates then elected the following officers by acclamation: Maged Abdelaziz (Egypt); Charles Themban Ntwaagae (Botswana); Park In-kook (Republic of Korea); Asad Majeed Khan (Pakistan); Jiri Hlaváček (Czech Republic); Tania Valerie Raguž (Croatia); John Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda); Anna Bianchi (Argentina); Paolo Soprano (Italy); and John Matuszak (US). The PrepCom also decided that John Ashe and Park In-kook will serve as PrepCom Co-Chairs and Tania Valerie Raguž will serve as Rapporteur. Brazil, as host country, will also serve as an *ex officio* member of the Bureau.

In his opening remarks, Co-Chair Park said the UNCSD presents an important opportunity to assess progress since the 1992 Earth Summit and unite the international community. However, he added that current challenges complicate the policy landscape. He encouraged an interactive dialogue involving all stakeholders.

Sha Zukang, Secretary-General of the UNCSD, noted that the PrepCom was meeting against the backdrop of multiple crises, and that despite two centuries of spectacular growth, poverty has not been eradicated. He warned that continuing on the current path will bequeath material and environmental poverty, not prosperity, to future generations. He also said that, with only eight days of meeting time over the next two years, the PrepCom must be efficient. He suggested that delegates should specify mechanisms through which it could use inputs from other intergovernmental and nongovernmental processes, such as: the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) Summit; the review of the SIDS Mauritius Strategy for Implementation (MSI+5); the meetings of the Conferences of the Parties (COPs) to the Rio Conventions; the UN Environment Programme (UNEP)

Governing Council and Global Ministerial Environmental Forum; the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) Governing Council; and the least-developed-countries (LDCs) conference. He said the dedicated UNCSA Secretariat would be supported by two executive coordinators, staff from the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), and other agencies' staff on secondment. There would also be coordination of inputs from the UN system by the Executive Committee of Economic and Social Affairs, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) for the Environmental Management Group, and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) for the UN Development Group. While indicating that member states should take the lead, he stressed that major groups are also needed. He also declared that he was "fed up with turf battles and tricks and games" and urged everyone to do business in an open and transparent manner and strive to find common ground.

Delegates adopted the agenda (A/CONF/216/PC/1) and organization of work. Co-Chair Park proposed establishing two contact groups: one (co-chaired by Paolo Soprano and Asad Majeed Khan) to review organizational and procedural matters and the other (co-chaired by Ana Bianchi and John Matuszak) to review the UNCSA's draft rules of procedure.

Tariq Banuri, Director of the UN Division for Sustainable Development (DSD), then introduced the Secretary-General's report on "Progress to date and remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits in the area of sustainable development and analysis of the themes for the Conference" (A/CONF.216/PC/2).

**GENERAL STATEMENTS:** In their opening statements, many speakers supported the opportunity afforded by UNCSA to review implementation of the outcomes of the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992, the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002, and other relevant events. Many also noted that in spite of progress in some areas, most internationally-agreed goals had not been achieved.

Yemen, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China (G-77/China), noted the lack of a clear and consensual definition for a "green economy." He also stressed the importance of further defining the relationship between all three pillars of sustainable development.

Spain, on behalf of the European Union (EU), said UNCSA should be forward looking and deliver an ambitious and action-oriented outcome that avoids overlap with ongoing processes. He welcomed the establishment of the Consultative Group of ministers or high-level representatives on international environmental governance established by UNEP's Governing Council in February 2010. He also urged participants to give guidance to the Bureau on a road map and timetable for the entire preparatory process and list of background documents needed for PrepCom II.

Canada, also speaking on behalf of Australia and New Zealand, said the PrepCom should not duplicate work in other processes, including the CSD. Given the length of the preparatory process, he said the PrepCom should make efficient use of available time through focused discussion and use of other complementary processes.

Brazil stressed the need for a balanced approach between the three pillars of sustainable development. Venezuela endorsed the process, noting that the Washington Consensus is now outdated.

Switzerland said the Stockholm and Rio Conferences reflect the last century and the last millennium. He stressed the need for stronger institutions and clear goals. He also noted that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have been crucial for the development agenda and suggested that such goals may be needed for the environment.

Japan said the UNCSA should result in a short, compelling document on the two themes, not a review of Agenda 21.

The United States said some are referring to the UNCSA as "Rio for 20-somethings" since we need to connect the next generation to sustainable development issues. He supported progress on the institutional framework through UNEP's programme on international environmental governance (IEG). He also supported fully integrating the environmental pillar into social and economic issues at all levels, and promoting gender issues.

UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner said the balance sheet on sustainable development is not encouraging. He argued that UNCSA is our opportunity to respond in an integrated way to the multiple crises we face today.

Veerle Vandeweerd, Director, UNDP Environment and Energy Group, noted the need for greater convergence between the environmental pillar of sustainable development and the economic and social pillars. She said the green economy provides an opportunity to build bridges between them.

Co-Chair Ashe invited statements from the major groups. Women urged stronger global governance structures, strengthening women's participation in decision making, and equal speaking rights for major groups in the UNCSA process. Children and Youth proposed using social media and Web 2.0 technologies to encourage public participation and empower people to deliver the change required.

Indigenous Peoples said the current economic, ecological and social crises and widespread inequity show just how far short we have fallen in achieving Agenda 21 and other agreed goals. She proposed developing the architecture for a green economy.

NGOs welcomed UNCSA Secretary-General Sha Zukang's pledge of an open and transparent process, urged a strong political outcome in 2012, and expressed concern about the development implications of some bilateral trade agreements.

Local Authorities highlighted cities' role at the center of a green economy. Workers and Trade Unions emphasized equity issues, reform of economic and financial governance, and concerns that specific solutions are still being developed in policy-making silos, rather than in a more holistic setting.

Business and Industry highlighted the private sector's role as the primary source of economic activity, jobs, innovation, products and services. She said UNCSA should not seek to reinvent what is already underway.

The Scientific and Technological Community highlighted UNCSA as an opportunity to address widespread failures in implementing outcomes from UNCED and WSSD. Drawing attention to data showing that we are now living beyond the planet's "carrying capacity," he said failure in the UNCSA process would plunge humanity into danger.

Farmers noted the role of sustainable agriculture and food security, and stressed the need to highlight local successes as well as failures, since the public will respond better if there are some positive examples that can be replicated.

**PROGRESS TO DATE AND REMAINING GAPS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OUTCOMES OF THE MAJOR SUMMITS IN THE AREA OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, AS WELL AS AN ANALYSIS OF THE THEMES FOR THE CONFERENCE**

Participants held four sessions in plenary on this agenda item. These sessions focused on:

- progress to date and remaining gaps in implementation;
- new and emerging challenges;
- a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication; and
- the institutional framework for sustainable development.

The following section outlines the discussions held on these substantive issues.

**PROGRESS TO DATE AND REMAINING GAPS IN IMPLEMENTATION:** On Monday morning, 17 May, PrepCom Co-Chair John Ashe asked parties to comment on progress to date and remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits in the area of sustainable development. In this regard, he asked speakers to respond to three questions:

- What indicators or information have proven most useful for assessing gaps and progress towards sustainable development?
- What underlying factors explain gaps in implementation, and what steps need to be taken to address these factors to bridge the implementation gap?
- What kind of guidance would be helpful for countries, international organizations and other stakeholders for preparing inputs on assessment of progress and gaps in implementation to enrich the UNCS D process?

**Indicators or information for assessing gaps and progress:**

In response to this question, many speakers highlighted the critical importance of relevant data. The G-77/China said many outcomes from the major conferences in Stockholm (1972), Rio (1992) and Johannesburg (2002) had not been implemented. He suggested that the current energy, food, climate, financial and economic crises show the implementation gap.

The EU said data illustrate uneven progress among regions, countries and population groups.

Egypt said indicators from UNEP, UNDP, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other sources demonstrate an “overwhelming” gap in implementation. Stating that the situation had deteriorated since 1992, Bolivia said we need to address inequality indicators between countries. Indonesia said an assessment of progress on MDGs would provide an important indicator, and supported a monitoring system on sustainable development needs.

Pakistan said the absence of clear benchmarks and indicators has hampered the ability to monitor progress effectively. With India, he urged more quantitative work.

**Underlying factors behind the gaps in implementation, and steps needed to bridge the gaps:** Many speakers highlighted serious gaps in implementation, citing the need for renewed political will. Developing countries in particular suggested that a

key reason for implementation gaps was that donor commitments to provide financing, capacity building and technology flows had not been met.

The G-77/China highlighted inadequate financial support and urged renewed political impetus to honor internationally-agreed goals, including the MDGs. He highlighted the particular needs of vulnerable countries such as least developed countries (LDCs) and SIDS. South Africa said resources from donors have been inadequate, inconsistent and difficult to access. Bolivia urged adopting binding mechanisms so developed countries that fail to meet their commitments can be sanctioned and tried by an international body. He expressed doubts about whether the green economy concept and monetizing nature will solve the implementation problem. Cuba said the market had not provided an answer to sustainable development or poverty alleviation.

Spain, for the EU, highlighted the need for adequate means of implementation, including training and technical cooperation. She supported recent donor efforts to improve ODA and improved use of financing for sustainable development. She said UNCS D should be action-oriented and forward looking, and identify best practices and success stories.

Norway supported an institutional framework that pursues the three pillars of sustainable development collectively and a genuine commitment to “walk the walk” on gender issues. Switzerland noted lack of progress on climate change and biodiversity, and asked if the “spirit of Rio” had been lost.

Australia noted a lack of robust priority setting at all levels. He supported greater stakeholder collaboration and standardized information or comparable metrics for evaluating progress.

**Guidance for preparing inputs on assessments of progress and gaps:** Switzerland and Palestine said all relevant stakeholders should be involved. Argentina said the process should highlight links to the MDGs and gender equality. Egypt urged an assessment of the role and value of markets and partnerships in implementation. Guatemala urged indicators looking at broader issues such as countries’ vulnerability and the impact of the financial and economic crisis, and said PrepCom I should set out a clear roadmap towards PrepCom II. Pakistan said countries would need time to consider these questions domestically and assess gaps at the national and community levels.

The Republic of Korea urged improved indicator-related data and agreement on criteria to evaluate various tools, policies and instruments. He also drew attention to the upcoming MDG Summit in September 2010. Australia warned against duplicating work in other processes and fora. The US proposed addressing implementation gaps in the fields of climate change, food security, water, health and gender. Nigeria said preparations for UNCS D should be at the local, national and international levels. Noting that future growth will take place in developing countries’ urban areas, UNFPA supported more data on cities.

**NEW AND EMERGING CHALLENGES:** On Monday afternoon, delegates considered new and emerging challenges. The discussion was guided by three questions:

- What new and emerging challenges/issues should be considered at the UNCS D? How do these impact the advancement of the sustainable development agenda?
- How can the link between science, education and policy be

strengthened to address the new and emerging challenges, especially those defined under the preceding question?

- In addition to measures already being implemented by the countries, what additional measures are needed to enable countries to strengthen resilience to shocks emanating from new and emerging challenges?

The Republic of Korea identified three pending issues he called the “three Fs”—finance, food and fuel. He also identified three existing major issues, which he labeled the “three Es”—economy, environment and energy. He said UNCS D should also address water resource management.

Indonesia supported strengthening global partnerships, including an enabling environment to facilitate the mobilization of resources, capacity building and technology transfer.

Singapore, on behalf of the G-77/China, said discussions on new and emerging challenges should focus on inequality, poverty alleviation, the sovereign right of countries to use their resources, and common but differentiated responsibilities. Other issues that should be considered include the financial, economic, food and energy crises, climate change, biodiversity loss and desertification, water scarcity, the frequency of disasters and disaster recovery.

Spain, on behalf of the EU, called for indicators of wellbeing rather than simply GDP, changing consumption and production patterns, and improving good governance.

The US stressed the importance of investing in education and training from childhood to adulthood, noting that investment in people is a prerequisite for sustainable development.

Tajikistan said water is a vital component of sustainable development and noted the conference on the midterm survey of the International Decade of Action “Water for Life” 2005-2015, to be held in Dushanbe from 8-10 June 2010.

Bolivia called for a new relationship with “Mother Earth” and a declaration on the rights of Mother Earth, as well as a tribunal for environment and climate change. Australia said water issues could be addressed under the green economy theme.

Egypt stressed the following issues: the current imbalance in international economic governance; objective assessment of markets and their reliability; migration and the related brain drain, including intellectual property rights; fisheries; the crisis of confidence in international sustainable development negotiations; science and education; and the need for an open and inclusive international economic framework.

Norway, supported by Switzerland, said no new global sustainable development challenges had emerged since resolution 64/236 was adopted in December 2009 that are not being discussed in other fora or cannot be captured under the existing themes. Sweden echoed the comments from Norway and Switzerland and added the importance of mainstreaming gender equality.

Argentina said climate change, biodiversity loss and access to clean drinking water should be addressed urgently, and stressed the need to prevent crises and eliminate poverty and inequality.

The World Meteorological Organization stressed the link between science and policy. The International Labor Organization said the creation of green jobs is essential and the labor dimension of the green economy should be on the UNCS D agenda. Children and Youth supported moving from

green jobs to green careers that are sustainable. Women urged the development of a new sustainable development agency. NGOs said the unsustainability of the world’s military structure must be addressed, and governments should consider the Tobin Tax and World Solidarity Fund as ways of fulfilling existing promises.

### GREEN ECONOMY IN THE CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY ERADICATION:

On Tuesday morning, delegates discussed the UNCS D theme of green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication. The discussion was guided by three questions:

- What is your understanding of the concept of “green economy”? How does the concept of “green economy” contribute to achieving the overarching objective sustainable development, including poverty eradication?
- Can this theme underpin a move towards a sustainable development paradigm?
- What are the challenges that countries may face in transitioning to the Green Economy? How can these countries develop a tangible yet comprehensive framework of action, touching upon issues regarding policy decisions and possible reform, investment and natural resources management?

Yemen, for the G-77 China, said there is no clear and agreed definition of what “green economy” entails and no need to redefine sustainable development or replace it with an abstract concept. He cautioned that any transition to a “green economy” should not lead to conditionalities or standards that may restrict trade, financing or international assistance.

Spain, for the EU, said promoting a green economy is closely linked with efforts to promote sustainable consumption and production, energy efficiency and the use of renewable energies as well as provision of decent employment opportunities and improving prospects for human wellbeing.

Senegal called for a global green New Deal, and said the UNCS D must identify public and private investments required to achieve sustainable consumption and production. China called for implementing policies conducive to green development and creation of an enabling environment for green development. Bolivia expressed concern with calls for the commercialization of nature, arguing that indigenous peoples will never accept this vision.

Cuba raised questions about the green economy and how to guarantee compliance, fairness in international markets, and international cooperation. Uruguay said “sustainable development” should not be abandoned, the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities should be reaffirmed and new forms of protectionism rejected.

India warned that green economy should not emerge as a normative straightjacket. Noting lack of clarity on whether it was a path, a trajectory or a destination, he said equity should be a fundamental part of the green economy and highlighted local and national decision making.

The Republic of Korea said green investments can prevent environmental degradation, while creating jobs and improving the economy. He also promoted its Global Green Growth Initiative and plans for a Sustainable Development Center for Asia-Pacific.

Mexico said this discussion will lead to a better understanding of linkages between the economy and the environment and supplement national efforts to achieve a stronger and cleaner economy.

Norway said green economy does not sideline sustainable development. She called on the Secretariat to work with the international financial institutions and other agencies to develop recommendations based on the seven focal areas in the Secretary-General's report.

The Russian Federation raised questions about "green economy" versus sustainable development, the social aspects of development, protectionism and green labeling. Indonesia said the multilateral trading system must facilitate the transition to a green economy and the UNCSD must avoid "sound bite" targets.

Ecuador urged clarity on the scope, mechanisms and resources that will be made available to assist developing countries achieve a green economy. The US said green economy is compatible with sustainable development and stressed the role of universities and research groups in promoting innovation. Argentina said environmental measures will have to be designed and implemented in such a way that they are compatible with the WTO, based on scientific evidence, developed transparently and inclusively, and take into account needs of developing countries.

Switzerland said green economy should not be a new development paradigm but a concrete contribution towards the overarching goal of sustainability. Venezuela said we should speak about a green society rather than a green economy. Sweden said green economy is a prerequisite for sustainable development and stressed the importance of sustainable urban development.

Brazil expressed constructive doubts about "green economy" and said there needs to be an in-depth dialogue with the private sector and NGOs, with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and South-South cooperation as essential components. Australia said a green economy includes good governance, recognizes the values of natural systems and the appropriate pricing of natural resources, and has flexibility for countries to determine the sustainability of their own policy settings.

Barbados stressed the need to promote private and public investment and said the outcomes from the upcoming Mauritius Strategy for the Implementation of the Barbados Plan for Action for Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States Review Conference should contribute to UNCSD. Colombia viewed the green economy as a means to achieve sustainable development.

Nepal, for LDCs, highlighted the need for a holistic approach, noted the WSSD's outcomes on combating poverty and climate change, and said the green economy should reinforce the interdependent nature of sustainable development. Japan said UNCSD should be output oriented and should not spend too much time debating definitions of green economy.

Egypt said the green economy is a pathway to sustainable development, not a way to lock in the advantages of certain developed countries. He proposed that UNDESA, in collaboration with UNEP, commission a study to assess the risks, challenges and benefits of a green economy, with input from economists and scientists from both North and South. Grenada,

the Russian Federation, Republic of Korea and India supported this proposal. Grenada also highlighted corporate responsibility and accountability, and stressed climate change as the greatest threat to SIDS' sustainable development.

Switzerland said the green economy was essential if we are to fully implement sustainable development. He said clear principles, tools and measures are needed to make a green economy a reality.

Canada viewed a green economy as a way to advance the aims of sustainable development. He agreed with Norway, the US and others on the need for a broad interpretation that allows countries and stakeholders to interpret the green economy within their domestic context. Mauritius said a green economy goes beyond a low-carbon economy and includes food security and other broader considerations.

The UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), on behalf of the regional economic commissions, said different ministries, NGOs and the private sector must be fully engaged. The UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) said it is ready to support this process by sharing its "Green Industry" experience. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) discussed green food labeling and the need for a framework for consumers and producers to choose what is best for them.

Reflecting on the discussions, UNEP noted the need to clearly define a green economy. He suggested that it represents a series of pathways to sustainable development and highlighted the immense employment opportunities already created. He acknowledged that there will be a transition period with job losses in some areas and gains in others. He said we should address "head on" concerns about differential benefits and risks, including trade risks, and argued that a Rio+20 summit could address, minimize and, where possible, eliminate risks.

Women supported including international financial institutions (IFIs) in preparations for Rio+20. Business and Industry said an enabling framework should support private sector innovation. The Scientific and Technological Community highlighted the need for investment in skills and education. Farmers urged recognition of land tenure rights, especially for women farmers, and a knowledge-based approach. Local Authorities stressed the potential of sustainable cities and the ecoBUDGET programme.

Indigenous Peoples noted risks of a green economy to human rights if, for instance, large hydro or nuclear power are a component. NGOs highlighted alternative economic indicators that include social values, the polluter pays approach, and scaling up successful local initiatives. Workers and Trade Unions emphasized studies showing the employment benefits of a green economy, and said workers should be part of workplace decision making.

UNDESA highlighted the UN's experience and inter-agency coordination on this topic.

**INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:** On Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday morning, delegates discussed the UNCSD theme of the institutional framework for sustainable development. This discussion was guided by three questions:

- What changes/adjustments are needed to strengthen the global institutional architecture on sustainable development? In particular, how can the CSD be strengthened?
- How can we encourage effective synergies between existing instruments and processes, and enhance coordination and cooperation between different multilateral agreements promoting sustainable development and environmental sustainability, as well as key international institutions?
- What actions are required to build stronger bridges between the three pillars of sustainable development and their respective institutions at global, regional, national and sub-national levels?

Yemen, for the G-77/China, noted consensus on the need for enhanced coordination and cooperation among international organizations and environmental agreements. However, he identified diverging views on how to enhance the efficiency of the current UN system in the area of sustainable development. He said discussions should be guided by Johannesburg Programme of Implementation (JPOI) Chapter II (institutional framework). He urged greater cooperation among UNEP, UNDP, other UN bodies, the Bretton Woods Institutions and the World Trade Organization (WTO). He suggested that the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) should promote greater coordination among its functional commissions, programmes and subsidiary bodies on Agenda 21 and the JPOI, and supported enhancing the role of the CSD, including reviewing and monitoring progress, ensuring coherence of implementation, initiatives and partnerships.

Spain, for the EU, said Rio+20 should result in a strengthened institutional architecture for global environmental and sustainable development governance. She said we should start from existing structures, and noted the consultative group of ministers or high-level representatives established by UNEP's Governing Council in February 2010. She underscored successes in promoting synergies among treaties addressing chemicals and waste. She supported reflection on the role and working methods of the CSD, discussions on strengthening the roles of other relevant UN institutions engaged in sustainable development, and exploring linkages between the institutional framework and the green economy.

Senegal highlighted UNDP's operational role and said the CSD needs to harness the three pillars of sustainable development. China said all three pillars must receive adequate attention. He said any review should prioritize assistance to developing countries, involve all member states and be conducted in a gradual manner.

The Republic of Korea supported strengthening linkages to the national and local levels as a means of ensuring implementation. Bolivia said the CSD is the high-level body for sustainable development in the UN system, and should have an enhanced role reviewing and monitoring progress on Agenda 21, as well as assessing actual and potential impacts of trade and financial policies.

Norway highlighted: further efforts to make the UN system deliver as one on sustainable development; the fact that the UN is not the only body engaged on sustainable development; and

the need to improve international environmental governance by reducing fragmentation and the multiplicity of bodies working in a piecemeal manner.

Japan stressed the CSD as the main body responsible for sustainable development in the UN system, highlighting its engagement with major groups. He urged respect for CSD's current multi-year programme, and suggested that Rio+20 could review CSD's work. He urged efficiencies and making the most of limited resources. Kenya said too many organizations are addressing sustainable development in too many meetings.

Brazil noted the idea of an "umbrella" structure focused on sustainable development and implementation of existing commitments, which would necessitate the review and revision of existing institutions such as ECOSOC and CSD.

Australia urged a fresh start in this discourse in order to inspire a new generation of thinkers. He looked forward to discussing ideas for reform, including proposals for a World Environment Organization, an umbrella sustainable development organization, or any hybrid of the two. Indonesia supported better mainstreaming of sustainable development into national agendas, and adequate support for developing countries. Grenada said the partnerships for sustainable development developed at WSSD urgently need resourcing. She also highlighted South-South cooperation.

UNEP outlined results from the "Belgrade process" on international environmental governance. He observed that the *status quo* is no longer an option, with the multiplicity of meetings and processes "disenfranchising" smaller nations from participating in many of these discussions due to limited financial and human resources. He warned that the public will become increasingly skeptical of multilateral arrangements if the system cannot deliver results. He stressed that the UN has a unique convening capacity for addressing international environmental governance, and urged a bold rethinking and perhaps a restructuring at UNCSD.

Switzerland noted agreement that the current framework is not adequate. He proposed a "frank, forward looking and critical assessment of CSD, ECOSOC and its other functional commissions." Noting the value of the MDGs, he said something similar for the environment could be valuable.

The US highlighted the role of national governments in achieving sustainable development. He highlighted the principles and capacity-building elements of the Bali Strategic Plan, and underlined the threats to the global marine environment and the need to protect fish stocks and marine areas.

Montenegro said adequate frameworks for sustainable development are lacking at the national level, noting that the UNCSD needs reliable domestic partners to implement its decisions. Mexico supported strengthening the CSD and UNEP, avoiding duplication, and engaging all government ministries, local government and civil society in order to achieve implementation.

Workers and Trade Unions urged a strong UN system, government accountability, a financial mechanism to support action, transparency and democracy in decision making.

NGOs warned of a "credibility crisis," with data showing a failure to meet goals such as the 2010 biodiversity target. She also warned of an "institutional crisis," with UNEP and the

CSD lacking the mandate to enforce commitments and ensure countries' accountability. She proposed reforming not just the mandate of the UN, but also of the Bretton Woods Institutions and WTO. She suggested shifting from an evolutionary to a revolutionary process that delivers a bold political decision and holds all stakeholders accountable.

Indigenous Peoples noted a disconnect between the work of the CSD on sustainable development and policies pursued by the IMF and World Bank. Women urged the development of an equitable and inclusive international governance structure for sustainable development and environment, and said this new structure should take a human rights approach. She supported reform of the financial architecture, a financial transactions tax, and an increased focus on local, subnational and regional activities.

Business and Industry supported strengthening the CSD and highlighted the value of major groups' engagement, the clustering of related processes, and partnerships at all levels. She said Rio+20 could encourage, *inter alia*, expansion of the global trading system.

The Scientific and Technological Community said improved international environmental governance was critical to sustainable development and scientific capacity should be supported in developing countries.

Children and Youth noted the Swiss proposal for environmental goals similar to the MDGs, and suggested that these could even be goals for sustainable development. He called for an inspiring vision that results in implementation.

**CO-CHAIRS' SUMMARY:** During the plenary session on Wednesday evening, Co-Chair Ashe presented a 17-page draft Co-Chairs' Summary of the substantive discussions at PrepCom I. He explained that the summary provides the Co-Chairs' perspective and overview of key points made during the plenary sessions, and invited comments on the text.

Many delegates praised the summary as providing a good overview of the discussion, while several also commented on specific elements of the text. Regarding the introduction, Yemen, for the G-77/China, said it was important to recollect the aims and themes adopted in General Assembly resolution 64/236. Guatemala suggested a chapeau clarifying that this is not a negotiated text.

In the section on green economy, Cuba highlighted discussions on poverty eradication, the US underscored the role of the private sector, and Japan sought greater emphasis on the environmental pillar of sustainable development. The Russian Federation highlighted interlinkages between the green economy and agriculture, including the issue of GMOs.

In the section on institutional framework, Cuba noted comments on strengthening existing structures rather than creating new ones. The US commented on governance in the context of oceans, protected areas and fisheries. Brazil highlighted its remarks on a new paradigm of international cooperation, South-South partnerships and North-South-South initiatives. Major Groups emphasized corporate accountability.

Co-Chair Ashe thanked delegates for their comments, indicating that he will take them under consideration and that the final version of the text will be available on the UNCSO website: <http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/rio20/>

**Overview of the Co-Chairs' Summary:** The Co-Chairs' summary contains sections on the opening plenary session, and on plenary discussions about progress to date and gaps in implementation, new and emerging challenges, the green economy and the institutional framework.

On the opening session, the Co-Chairs' text reports on the election of the bureau and on general statements from delegates. It highlights comments on a range of issues, including the relevance of the MDGs, the aims for UNCSO as set out in General Assembly resolution 64/236, the need for political commitment and a rekindled "spirit of Rio," and the importance of transparency and full engagement by Major Groups.

In the section on progress to date and gaps in implementation of the outcomes of major summits, the Co-Chairs highlight comments on the "inconclusive and uneven" achievements to date, the need to fill gaps in indicators, data and information. The text also highlights implementation gaps or challenges relating to poverty, food security, biodiversity, climate change, water and sanitation, gender equality, and sustainable production and consumption. It also notes a "lack of mutually coherent policies and approaches supportive of sustainable development in the areas of finance, investment, trade, capacity building, and technology transfer."

On new and emerging challenges, the text highlights discussions on the financial, economic, food and energy crises. It also notes climate change, biodiversity loss, desertification, water scarcity, lack of access to clean water and sanitation, health challenges and natural disasters. The Co-Chairs note some delegates' view that the UNCSO agenda should not be expanded, since these issues could be accommodated within the previously-agreed thematic focus on the green economy and institutional framework.

On the green economy, the Co-Chairs' text notes a lack of consensus on its definition and meaning. However, it notes agreement that it complements rather than substitutes for sustainable development. The text also notes comments that there are many approaches to a green economy, depending on national circumstances. It explains the green economy should have a strong focus on equity and employment opportunities and poverty eradication. International support for the transition to a green economy should "not lead to conditionalities, parameters and standards which might generate unjustified or unilateral restrictions in the areas of trade, financing, ODA or other forms of international assistance." The text also notes a request from several delegates for a study on the benefits, challenges and risks of a transition to a green economy.

Finally, on the institutional framework, the Co-Chairs' text highlights an effective institutional framework as crucial for full implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the WSSD, and important in achieving the MDGs. The text notes differences among participants on how to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the UN system. However, it highlights many speakers' comments that the CSD is the high-level intergovernmental body responsible for sustainable development, and should be strengthened and be more forward looking and action oriented. The text also notes calls for more effective inter-agency coordination, as well as recognition of



the “incoherence, fragmentation, lack of synergies, inefficiency and ineffectiveness” in the current system of international environmental governance, which needs to be addressed.

### **ORGANIZATIONAL AND PROCEDURAL MATTERS**

Discussions under this agenda item focused on the preparatory process for UNCSD, and were conducted in a contact group facilitated by Paolo Soprano (Italy) and Asad Majeed Khan (Pakistan). The group deliberated on how best to organize an efficient preparatory process for the UNCSD given the short time allotted by UNGA resolution 64/236, which provides for a total of eight days for the three PrepCom sessions. After lengthy deliberations on a possible intersessional process to give greater time for discussions, the group finally concluded its work on Wednesday evening, two hours after the PrepCom was originally scheduled to conclude.

During the initial contact group discussions, the EU emphasized the importance of involving the UN agencies, IFIs and major groups, as well as giving a voice to civil society and other stakeholders. It proposed making use of all relevant fora and current processes that could contribute inputs. Rather than copying UNCED and WSSD, the EU urged innovative ways of preparation, such as using the internet, “light-touch” reporting by the secretariat, and sending out a questionnaire for governments and major groups, with deadlines for inputs. The EU also thought the focus of preparatory activities, including regional meetings at the end of 2011 and various reports, could be the themes of the conference, including the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication.

Switzerland and many others supported soliciting input from inside and outside the UN system, the US spoke of a cost-effective, efficient and inclusive process, and Australia and several others cautioned against duplication.

The G-77/China called for thorough and intensive preparations. It noted that the preparatory process, while drawing on input from the UN system and major groups, should be at the intergovernmental level, to be conducted from the comprehensive perspective of sustainable development, rather than from the narrow perspective of specific UN agencies or IFIs. It proposed an intersessional intergovernmental process in the form of an open-ended working group negotiating in New York, reasoning that this will facilitate the preparatory process. The G-77/China also emphasized that implementation of commitments must be the central element of the UNCSD.

In response, the EU said there was no desire to replace sustainable development with the concept of green economy, nor a wish to invent new themes, but rather “upload” successes achieved in sustainable development at all levels. The Russian Federation cautioned against reopening negotiations over the consensus UNGA resolution 64/236 and called for a concrete plan of negotiating a focused political document.

On Tuesday night, the co-facilitators produced a one-page draft of recommendations containing the main points where they felt a convergence of views had emerged. The recommendations included outreach to UN agencies and IFIs, integrating other processes, soliciting and synthesizing reports from experts and governments, devising a roadmap for preparations, and

organizing open-ended intersessional meetings of not more than seven days prior to PrepCom II in 2011, and possibly further activities before PrepCom III in 2012.

On Wednesday morning, the contact group held a paragraph-by-paragraph reading of the draft. The G-77/China insisted on keeping the text within the language of UNGA resolution 64/236, added mention of the three Rio Conventions and regional development banks, and suggested dropping reference to the specific themes of the conference, including the green economy. The need for different deadlines for different contributions was raised by the Russian Federation, and supported by Norway and Switzerland. As a result, the deadlines were adjusted.

In the last hours of negotiations on Wednesday, the main obstacle proved to be the question of intersessional meetings (paragraph 8 of the co-facilitators’ text). In the afternoon, the co-facilitators produced a revised version of the recommendations, with new language on intersessional meetings. After consultations, the G-77/China accepted the new draft “as a package,” asking, however, for a footnote to the effect that the recommendations do not imply an invitation to governing bodies to convene additional meetings that go beyond their regular programme of work. While the EU and other participants agreed to the new language, the US said it could not, on the grounds that the paragraph language was vague, that intersessional meetings are not useful at this stage, and that PrepCom I did not need to decide on the issue. Switzerland proposed amended language to the paragraph on intersessional meetings, proposing a five-day meeting between PrepCom II and PrepCom III, and a two-day one immediately prior to PrepCom III.

After intense consultations, a compromise text was negotiated and presented to the contact group. Delegates added a sentence to one paragraph detailing the deadline for inputs for meetings between PrepComs II and III, and the contact group approved the new revised recommendations at 7:30 pm. Shortly after 8:00 pm, the text was presented in plenary, and delegates adopted the text without further amendment.

**DECISION:** The outcome calls for enhanced planning and coordination, and asks the Bureau, with support from the Secretariat, to provide a calendar of meetings relevant to the UNCSD process. It also calls on member states and relevant UN system organizations to provide technical contributions and inputs, and IFIs, regional development banks and other international and regional organizations to do the same. The deadline for inputs is 31 October 2010, “as well as eight weeks prior to the intersessional meetings to take place between the Second and Third Preparatory Committees.” The text also highlights the role of major groups.

On the subject of intersessional meetings, it calls on the Secretariat and relevant UN agencies, in consultation with the Bureau, to organize, within existing resources, open-ended informal intersessional meetings of not more than six days: a two-day meeting before PrepCom II, and two two-day meetings between PrepComs II and III, the last one no later than eight weeks prior to PrepCom III, in order to have “focused substantive discussions to advance the subject matter of the Conference.”

## **DRAFT RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE CONFERENCE**

This contact group, which discussed the draft rules of procedure for UNCSA (A/CONF.216/PC/4), met from Monday to Wednesday, facilitated by Ana Bianchi (Argentina) and John Matuszak (US).

In the first meeting, the US emphasized the importance of ensuring openness of meetings to stakeholders, a proposal supported by Canada, Norway and others. Delegates subsequently approved a number of minor editorial changes, and also agreed that the term “general agreement” will be replaced by “consensus,” and references to a “summit” will be replaced with “conference,” in line with UNGA resolution 64/236.

However, a disagreement arose over references in the text to Palestine and, in particular, the European Union. The EU asked to amend the draft rules (which were taken from the WSSD) by referring solely to the European Union, rather than the European Community, a term that had been superseded by the Lisbon Treaty. The G-77/China questioned whether the EU’s change in name/status had been recognized formally by the relevant UN bodies, noting that ECOSOC decision 1995/201 gives recognition to the “European Community,” not the EU. She said the G-77/China needed clarification on this matter before it could agree to include a reference to the EU in the UNCSA’s rules of procedure. In a session of the contact group held on Tuesday, a representative of the UN Office of Legal Affairs attended, and parties asked for clarification on this question of legal status. The representative did not provide an oral response to the questions raised, and indicated that any question should be submitted in writing.

In the contact group session held on Wednesday, several parties expressed frustration that they had not been able to get clarity from the representative of the UN Office of Legal Affairs on this issue. Co-Chair Matuszak clarified that the representative of the UN’s legal office had said a written question formally agreed by the PrepCom would be required. He added that the representative had been invited to rejoin the group at its current meeting, but that he did not appear to be present. The G-77/China then sought agreement to table a written question with the Office of Legal Affairs, on behalf of the PrepCom. However, the EU would not agree to this. He stated that the UN and all member states had been formally notified of the name change to the EU in December 2009, and said CSD 18 had already been working under the same rules and process and recognizing the EU, so there is a clear precedent for the name change. He also stated that it was not a relevant issue for this group. However, the G-77/China countered that it was still unclear on the legal standing of the “EU” in the UN and had a right to raise any questions it felt were appropriate.

In an attempt to reach a compromise, Co-Chair Matuszak proposed that the G-77/China’s questions be included in the report of the meeting, and that the Bureau could seek legal clarity on this matter from the Office of Legal Affairs. He also proposed that the draft rules of procedure forwarded to plenary include the revisions agreed over the previous two days by the contact group, since he did not wish to lose the work done and revert to the original draft. However, the G-77/China would not agree to this proposal.

In the plenary on Wednesday evening, Co-Chair Matuszak reported that agreement on the draft rules of procedure had not been reached due to questions regarding the EU’s participation. He noted that, since these rules of procedure apply only to the UNCSA and not to its PrepComs, the inability to conclude discussions will not prevent future PrepCom sessions from conducting their work. However, he hoped for more progress on this matter at PrepCom II.

The G-77/China expressed “deep disappointment with the manner in which our concerns were addressed,” while the EU said this debate over its name change was unnecessary.

PrepCom Co-Chair Park said the contact group’s discussions would be included in the report of PrepCom I.

## **CLOSING PLENARY**

On Wednesday evening, delegates met for the closing plenary and adopted the report of the session (A/CONF.216/PC/L.1), which will be submitted to the General Assembly.

UNCSA Secretary-General Sha Zukang said PrepCom I had provided clarity on the process moving forward, had identified challenges and engaged many stakeholders. He highlighted discussions about the institutional framework, noting with satisfaction the focus on all levels, including local, national, regional and international. He also assured delegates that the UN would be working collectively to support them in their work, highlighted collaboration with major groups, and promised transparency.

Co-Chair Ashe said delegates had provided the Bureau with adequate guidance and laid a positive foundation to move forward. He said the Bureau, with support from the Secretariat, will take the guidance and chart a roadmap to PrepCom II. He added that information on intersessional meetings and Bureau discussions would be made available online and through the usual mechanisms. Thanking all participants for their patience and dedication, he closed the session at 9:02 pm.

## **A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF PREPCOM I**

On the opening morning of the first PrepCom for the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development, discussions were interrupted by a recurring technical hitch—the lights in the conference room turned off several times, plunging delegates into darkness. Ironically, this technical problem summed up how many delegates felt as the PrepCom began, with a majority admitting they felt “in the dark” about what to expect and uncertain how the meeting would go. By the conclusion of the meeting late on Wednesday, 19 May, however, most delegates seemed satisfied that some light had been shed on how to move forward. Although the meeting may not have been particularly inspiring, most participants left satisfied that they had succeeded in identifying key challenges, and charting a “roadmap” for the preparatory process over the next two years. This brief analysis outlines some of the key substantive and procedural questions at PrepCom I, and where things stand on the way to Brazil in 2012.

## **QUESTIONS, NOT ANSWERS**

Participants arrived on Monday morning with a host of questions and uncertainties. This was only natural, since this was the first meeting of what will be a two-year long process. As

many delegates were quick to point out, the only real guidance coming into PrepCom I was General Assembly resolution 64/236, adopted on 24 December 2009. This resolution is short on detail: of the 29 operative paragraphs, only six deal directly with the UNCSD process and focus. These paragraphs establish that a PrepCom should meet three times, for a total of eight days. They clarify that UNCSD will take place in Brazil in 2012 (leading many to call it “Rio+20” or “Rio 2012”). And they set out the UNCSD’s goals, which are to secure renewed political commitment for sustainable development, assess the progress and implementation gaps in meeting previously-agreed commitments, and address new and emerging challenges. Finally, they agree on two themes, which may be refined during the preparatory process: a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication; and the institutional framework for sustainable development.

While such a paucity of detail is only to be expected at this stage in the process, it is hardly surprising that delegates arrived at PrepCom I feeling somewhat uncertain. Many were wondering how the substantive discussions on gaps, emerging issues, the green economy and governance would proceed. In addition, there were questions about both the preparatory process and the UNCSD itself. Many delegates arrived asking whether eight days of preparatory meetings would be sufficient, and if more could be added? Some also seemed unclear just how “big” the UNCSD would (or should) become. There were also questions about the two key themes of governance and the green economy. Each was the subject of some hard bargaining in December 2009 before being endorsed by the General Assembly. Would all participants still be satisfied with retaining just two key themes? Would previous doubts over governance re-emerge? And would initial doubts about the meaning of “green economy” be settled?

### **THE GREEN ECONOMY – HAVE YOU SEEN THE LIGHT?**

The substantive discussions at PrepCom I focused on four areas: gaps in implementation, new and emerging issues, the green economy and the institutional framework governing action on sustainable development. The discussion on gaps in implementation certainly provided food for thought, with developing countries, in particular, highlighting many failures to honor pledges made at UNCED in 1992, the WSSD in 2002, and elsewhere. Few participants seemed inclined to argue with the rather somber analysis of the current unsustainable state of affairs.

However, there was less agreement on emerging issues and on the green economy. While many delegates were keen to highlight new issues such as the global financial meltdown or the emerging challenge of water management, developed countries in particular felt it should not lead to the addition of new themes on UNCSD’s agenda. They argued instead that these “new” issues had already been considered in the discussions that led to General Assembly resolution 64/236, and that they could be accommodated under the two existing themes.

Discussions on the green economy provoked the most substantive comments. Many developed countries viewed this concept as critical to achieving sustainable development. Indeed, some brought real passion and “fire” to their interventions. Others seemed less sure. “While they may have ‘seen the light’ on the green economy, I have yet to be converted,” said one

developing country delegate, summing up the mood of many in the G-77/China. A particular concern for the developing world is that the concept could be used by industrialized countries to impose restrictions on trade or ODA, or be the thin end of a wedge that ushers in protectionism. Others were concerned that it would replace “sustainable development” and, if so, the third pillar, social development, would be downplayed. For these reasons, the G-77/China insisted that the concept be anchored in principles of equity and sought a clear definition. For their part, green economy champions such as Norway, the EU and UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner sought to reassure everyone that the green economy is a pathway to sustainable development rather than a substitute, and welcomed an “honest” discussion on what it can achieve, including both the risks and opportunities. Summing up the discussions on this topic, one insider described this as a “confidence building” stage where delegates seek to understand one another’s positions. The prevailing mood at the end of the meeting was that the exchange of views had helped, but the issue was far from resolved. “We have a long way to go on this one,” confided one delegate.

### **GOVERNANCE: LOOKING BACK TO THE FUTURE?**

Governance was also at the fore at PrepCom I. The debate over international environmental governance is hardly new. Indeed, it has been the subject of diplomatic efforts for many years. However, some governments, senior UN officials and civil society groups clearly hope UNCSD will provide the needed momentum for change.

Not everyone at PrepCom I welcomed the focus on governance. Many developing countries wanted to talk less about frameworks and more about industrialized countries’ “broken promises” and unmet commitments. Perhaps because delegates are already familiar with each other’s views, the plenary discussions on the topic used up only two of the four hours allotted. However, there was a more lively debate on the margins of the meeting and at side events. Much hope seems to be pinned on the two upcoming meetings of the High-level group of government representatives, which was re-established by the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum in Bali in February 2010. Their work is expected to feed into the discussion of new institutions on the road to Rio+20. Clearly, the governance issue will be addressed head-on at a later stage, when the issues pertaining to function are sufficiently cleared up to give way to discussion of form.

### **ILLUMINATING THE PROCESS?**

Questions of process were also on many delegates’ minds during PrepCom I. Major groups were concerned if UNCSD would have unrestricted civil society engagement, noting signs that it might be less open than UNCED. Some may have been reassured by UNCSD Secretary-General Sha Zukang’s pledge that he would fight for openness and transparency, but not everyone was convinced.

The lack of preparation time for UNCSD was another preoccupation. With resolution 64/236 allotting just eight days for the PrepCom over three sessions, many participants were worried there would not be time to develop strong, substantive outcomes. “We had ten weeks prior to UNCED,” recalled a veteran of the Rio Earth Summit, adding that “eight days is

nothing.” While most delegates agreed this was a problem, arguments over the optimal solution took many hours to resolve. The G-77/China’s proposal for an intergovernmental, open-ended working group that would convene intersessionally in New York was not supported by the EU and US. The EU’s preference was to collect inputs from UN agencies and international financial institutions, use other relevant fora that are already meeting, and find innovative ways to engage with multiple stakeholders. For its part, the US saw no value in holding intersessional meetings at this stage, arguing that the PrepCom still lacked the full complement of expert and agency input.

To some observers, the G-77/China’s preference for an intersessional process was based on fears that their preparations would be swamped by a lopsided influx of material, including from Western experts, in support of the green economy. This concept, although a legitimate theme of UNCSD, holds the danger of overshadowing a holistic approach to sustainable development and the main goal of the conference, which in most developing countries’ eyes is implementation of existing commitments, particularly on finance and technology transfer. As noted earlier, such fears will need to be assuaged if the UNCSD is to deliver a substantive outcome. Ultimately, the differences on intersessional meetings were resolved with an agreement to hold three meetings of two days each: one prior to PrepCom II, and the other two between PrepComs II and III. However, some expect questions over the best way to proceed to re-emerge as UNCSD gets closer.

Another process-related issue that re-emerged during PrepCom I was the status of the UNCSD or, in the words of one delegate, “How big Rio+20 is going to be?” While some would prefer a “Summit” involving heads of state or government, this was not acceptable to others, who reminded delegates that the General Assembly resolution refers to a “conference,” not a summit.

Perhaps more surprising was the dispute over the draft rules of procedure. The central point of contention was developing countries’ question about whether the EU’s change in name (from the “European Community”) had been recognized by the UN. This legal issue was met with “astonishment” by the Europeans. However, the G-77/China’s insistence on a clear legal opinion led to some surprisingly heated debates, prompting some to speculate that this was a bargaining chip to be traded off later. With no resolution at PrepCom I, the issue can be expected to come up again at PrepCom II.

#### **A CLEAR AND TRANSPARENT PATH?**

In spite of these disagreements, PrepCom I ended on a high note. First, it managed to produce a “roadmap” that gives guidance to the preparatory process. Secondly, it began addressing substantive issues. While some described the discussions as “truncated” or “fuzzy,” they should still assist governments, UN agencies, and stakeholders in focusing their work over the next two years. Of equal importance, the Bureau and the hard-working UN Secretariat, which struggled valiantly in the temporary UN building to provide an uninterrupted flow of documentation and logistical support, now has a clearer vision of the road ahead, and how to steer preparations towards a successful outcome in Brazil in 2012.

## **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

### **HIGH-LEVEL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE MIDTERM COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR ACTION “WATER FOR LIFE”, 2005-2015:**

This conference will be held in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, from 8-10 June 2010, as called for by UNGA resolution 64/198. It will review achievements during the first half of the Decade and provide policy guidance for the remainder of the Decade and for Rio+20. For more information, contact: Conference Secretariat; tel: +992-372-27-30-25; fax: +992-372-27-29-43; internet: <http://waterconference2010.tj/>

**UNEP CONSULTATIVE GROUP OF MINISTERS AND HIGH-LEVEL REPRESENTATIVES ON IEG:** This UNEP meeting will take place in Bogota, Colombia, from 7-9 July 2010 to consider broader reform of international environmental governance. A second meeting will take place in November 2010 in Helsinki, Finland. The purpose of these meetings is to prepare a report to inform the next meeting of the UNEP Governing Council in February 2011 and provide input to the Rio+20 process. For more information, contact Clara Nobbe, UNEP; tel: +254-20-762-3735; e-mail: [Clara.Nobbe@unep.org](mailto:Clara.Nobbe@unep.org); internet: <http://www.unep.org/environmental-governance/>

**MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS SUMMIT:** Taking place at UN Headquarters in New York from 20-22 September 2010, this meeting will focus on accelerating progress to achieve all the MDGs by 2015, taking into account progress made through a review of successes, best practices, lessons learned, obstacles and opportunities and leading to concrete strategies for action. For more information, visit: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/calendar.shtml>

**MAURITIUS STRATEGY +5 REVIEW:** This conference will be held at UN Headquarters in New York from 24-25 September 2010. Member states will undertake a five-year review of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. For more information, contact: Hiroko Morita-Lou, SIDS Unit, UN Division for Sustainable Development; tel: +1-212-963-8813; fax: +1-212-963-4260; e-mail: [morita-lou@un.org](mailto:morita-lou@un.org); internet: [http://www.sidsnet.org/msi\\_5/index.shtml](http://www.sidsnet.org/msi_5/index.shtml)

**CBD COP 10:** The tenth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) will be held from 18-29 October 2010, in Nagoya, Japan. COP 10 is expected to: assess achievement of the 2010 target to reduce significantly the rate of biodiversity loss; adopt a protocol on access and benefit-sharing and a revised strategic plan for the Convention; and celebrate the International Year of Biodiversity 2010. It will be preceded by the fifth Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. For more information, contact: CBD Secretariat; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: [secretariat@cbd.int](mailto:secretariat@cbd.int); internet: <http://www.cbd.int/cop10/>

**SIXTEENTH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE UNFCCC AND SIXTH MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE KYOTO PROTOCOL:** This meeting will take place 29 November - 10 December 2010 in Cancun, Mexico. For more

information, contact UNFCCC Secretariat: tel: +49-228-815-1000; fax: +49-228-815-1999; e-mail: secretariat@unfccc.int; internet: http://unfccc.int/

**FIRST INFORMAL INTERSESSIONAL MEETING FOR UNCSO:** At PrepCom I for the UNCSO, delegates agreed that the Bureau should organize, within existing resources, “open-ended informal intersessional meetings of not more than six days” in total. The aim of these meetings is to hold “focused substantive discussions to advance the subject matter of the Conference.” The first of these, a two-day event, is to take place prior to PrepCom II, which is being held in March 2011. The exact dates and venue are to be confirmed. For more information, contact: UN Division for Sustainable Development, fax: +1-212-963-4260; e-mail: dsd@un.org; internet: http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/rio20/

**TWENTY-SIXTH SESSION OF THE UNEP GOVERNING COUNCIL/GLOBAL MINISTERIAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM:** This meeting will be held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 21-25 February 2011. The event constitutes the annual ministerial-level global environmental forum in which participants gather to review important and emerging policy issues in the field of the environment. For more information, contact: Secretary, Governing Bodies, UNEP; tel: +254-20-762-3431; fax: +254-20-762-3929; e-mail: sgc.sgb@unep.org; internet: http://www.unep.org/resources/gov/overview.asp

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL PREPARATORY MEETING FOR CSD 19:** Scheduled to convene at UN Headquarters in New York from 28 February-4 March 2011, 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 Patterns. For more information, contact: UN Division for Sustainable Development; tel: +1-212-963-8102; fax: +1-212-963-4260; e-mail: dsd@un.org; internet: http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/

**SECOND PREPCOM FOR UNCSO (RIO+20):** This meeting, which will take place at UN Headquarters in New York from 7-8 March 2011, will convene in preparation for the UNCSO. For more information, contact: UN Division for Sustainable Development; fax: +1-212-963-4260; e-mail: dsd@un.org; internet: http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/rio20/

**CSD 19:** This policy-year session, scheduled to be held at UN Headquarters in New York from 2-13 May 2011, 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 Patterns. For more information, contact: UN Division for Sustainable Development; tel: +1-212-963-8102; fax: +1-212-963-4260; e-mail: dsd@un.org; internet: http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/

**SECOND AND THIRD INFORMAL INTERSESSIONAL MEETINGS FOR UNCSO:** At PrepCom I for the UNCSO, delegates agreed that the Bureau should organize, within existing resources, “open-ended informal intersessional meetings of not more than six days” in total. The second and third of these, which will each last for two days, are to take place between

PrepComs II and III, with the final intersessional meeting taking place no later than eight weeks prior to PrepCom 3. The aim of these meetings is to hold “focused substantive discussions to advance the subject matter of the Conference.” The exact dates and venue are still to be confirmed. For more information, contact: UN Division for Sustainable Development; fax: +1-212-963-4260; e-mail: dsd@un.org; internet: http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/rio20/

**THIRD PREPCOM FOR UNCSO (RIO+20):** This meeting will take place in 2012 immediately prior to UNCSO in Brazil. The final PrepCom is expected to focus on the outcomes of UNCSO. For more information, contact: UN Division for Sustainable Development, fax: +1-212-963-4260; e-mail: dsd@un.org; internet: http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/rio20/

**UN CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (RIO+20):** The UNCSO will take place in Brazil in 2012. Under UN General Assembly resolution 64/236, which was adopted on 24 December 2009, UNCSO will aim to secure renewed political commitment to sustainable development, assess the progress and implementation gaps in meeting already agreed commitments, and address new and emerging challenges. The Conference will include the following themes: a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication; and the institutional framework for sustainable development. For more information, contact: UN Division for Sustainable Development, fax: +1-212-963-4260; e-mail: dsd@un.org; internet: http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/rio20/

**GLOSSARY**

CSD	UN Commission on Sustainable Development
DSD	UN Division for Sustainable Development
ECOSOC	UN Economic and Social Council
ESCWA	Economic & Social Commission for West Asia
IEG	International Environmental Governance
IFIs	International Financial Institutions
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JPOI	Johannesburg Plan of Implementation
SIDS	Small island developing states
UNCSO	UN Conference on Sustainable Development
UNCED	UN Conference on Environment and Development
UNDESA	UN Department of Economic & Social Affairs
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNEP	UN Environment Programme
UNFCCC	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
WTO	World Trade Organization