

SUMMARY OF THE UNCSD (RIO+20) REGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETING FOR EUROPE: 1-2 DECEMBER 2011

The UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Regional Preparatory Meeting (RPM) for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD or Rio+20) convened at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, from 1-2 December 2011. Some 400 participants from governments, UN bodies, intergovernmental organizations, Major Groups and the media attended this fifth and final regional preparatory meeting on the road to the UNCSD, which will take place in June 2012 in Rio de Janeiro. The meeting was convened by the UN Economic Commission for Europe in close cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Participants engaged in three discussion sessions led by panels of keynote speakers drawn from governments and Major Groups. The sessions focused on an assessment of the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development as well as addressing new and emerging challenges; a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication; and the institutional framework for sustainable development (IFSD).

On outcomes from the major summits, participants recognized progress in the UNECE Region on sustainable development since the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), including the implementation of the UNECE regional conventions and initiatives such as Regional Environmental Centers. However, they also called for improvement in matters such as monitoring and evaluation of progress on sustainable development, better integration of the three pillars of sustainable development, and stronger regional coherence and cooperation. Proposals for consideration of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), possibly drawing on the UN experience with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), appeared to gain further traction in Geneva.

On the green economy in the context of sustainable development and the eradication of poverty, the need for a roadmap was strongly backed while there was also

acknowledgement of different views and the need to accommodate the unique challenges of different countries. A focus of discussion was on how the roadmap should relate to sustainable development, and the RPM left no doubt that the concept cannot be separated from considerations of poverty eradication. Social protection for workers in the transition to a green economy, social inclusion, and social protection floors and the implications of the current economic, financial and solvency crises were recurring themes.

Participants noted that discussion on IFSD has gained momentum, with a virtual consensus on numerous weaknesses in the current institutional arrangements, including fragmentation and limitations both in terms of resources and authority. Discussions continued to reflect the lack of a consensus on responses, with diverging views expressed on the future of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), approaches to enhancing the status of UNEP, and proposals for a Sustainable Development Council. There was both support for and

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opposition to proposals for a new international convention elaborating Rio Principle 10 on access to information and public participation.

A keynote intervention by Brazil, which came too late in the RPM to directly influence discussions, provided a strong indication of the likely direction and framing of some key UNCSD discussions, notably a permanent incorporation of poverty eradication and the prioritization of food security, equity, health and work in considerations of sustainable development. In particular, Brazil pressed for an “inclusive green economy,” signalling that the link between the green economy concept and sustainable development must be underscored at all times to ensure that the concept does not come to be interpreted as favoring aspects of commercialization of advanced technological solutions over priorities and realities in developing countries.

Participants in the UNECE RPM found the discussions in Geneva both “rich” and “intense.” The organizers were pleased that the combination of interactive and roundtable discussions encouraged delegates to do more than rehearse their written submissions on many issues—with the well-flagged exception of IFSD. Some observers felt that the effort to ensure that roundtables included a wide spectrum of stakeholders led to a top-heavy emphasis on keynote contributions. However, representatives from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the Business and Industry Major Groups were reportedly satisfied with the RPM. A series of eleven side events, on smart cities, agriculture, women, transport, trade and security were an integral part of the meeting, with organizers assured that their efforts would likely influence the outcomes of the meeting as reflected in a Co-Chairs’ summary. Outcomes from the RPM are also expected to be reflected in a UN regional interagency report for the Rio+20 Conference, “From Transition to Transformation: Sustainable and Inclusive Development in Europe and Central Asia.”

A BRIEF HISTORY OF UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCES

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD or Rio+20) will mark the 40th anniversary of the first major international political conference that specifically had the word “environment” in its title. The UNCSD seeks to secure renewed political commitment for sustainable development, assess progress and implementation gaps in meeting previously-agreed commitments, and address new and emerging challenges. The Conference will focus on the following themes: a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and the IFSD.

STOCKHOLM CONFERENCE: The UN Conference on the Human Environment was held in Stockholm, Sweden, 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 the testing of nuclear weapons; the creation of an international databank on environmental data; addressing actions linked to development and the environment; the creation of an environment fund; and establishing UNEP as the central node for global environmental cooperation and treaty making.

BRUNDTLAND COMMISSION: 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 World Commission on Environment and Development—more commonly known as the Brundtland Commission, named for 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 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 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 and the Convention on Biological Diversity were also opened for signature during the Earth Summit. Agenda 21 called for the creation of a Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), as a functional commission of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), to ensure effective follow-up of UNCED, enhance international cooperation, and examine progress in implementing Agenda 21 at the local, national, regional and international levels.

UNGASS-19: The 19th Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly (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 and examined implementation.

WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: The WSSD met from 26 August - 4 September 2002, in Johannesburg, South Africa. The goal of the WSSD, 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 countries, including 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 Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI); and the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development.

The JPOI is designed as a framework for action to implement the commitments originally agreed at UNCED and includes chapters on: poverty eradication; consumption and production; the natural resource base; health; small island developing states; 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.

64TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY: On 24 December 2009, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 64/236 and agreed to convene the UNCSD in 2012 in Brazil. Resolution 64/236 also called for holding three Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) meetings prior to the 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 Conference. The UN Secretary-General subsequently appointed Brice Lalonde (France) and Elizabeth Thompson (Barbados) as executive coordinators.

UNCSD PREPCOM I: The first session of the PrepCom for the UNCSD was held from 17-19 May 2010, at UN Headquarters in New York. The 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 IFSD. On the procedural side, participants met to organize their work in the lead-up to 2012, and to consider the UNCSD's rules of procedure.

FIRST INTERSESSIONAL MEETING FOR THE UNCSD: The first Intersessional Meeting for the UNCSD convened from 10-11 January 2011, at UN Headquarters in New York. During the meeting, delegates listened to a summary of the findings of the Synthesis Report on securing renewed political commitment for sustainable development, which assesses progress to date and remaining gaps in implementing the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development; and addresses new and emerging challenges. Panel discussions were also held on the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and on the IFSD.

UNCSD PREPCOM II: The second session of the PrepCom for the UNCSD took place from 7-8 March 2011, at UN Headquarters in New York. Delegates discussed progress to date and remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development, addressed new and emerging challenges, discussed the scope of a green economy and the idea of a blue economy, and debated the IFSD. At the end of the meeting, a decision was adopted on the process for preparing the draft outcome document for the UNCSD.

UNCSD REGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETING FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: This event was held at the headquarters of the Economic Commission for

Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in Santiago, Chile, from 7-9 September 2011. The main outcome of this meeting was a set of conclusions, which were negotiated by government representatives over the course of the meeting. Conclusions include: finding better ways to measure the wealth of countries that adequately reflect the three pillars of sustainable development; and a flexible and efficient global IFSD ensuring effective integration of the three pillars. The conclusions do not mention "green economy," as government representatives could not agree on whether to refer to the concept. The conclusions will be submitted to the Rio+20 Preparatory Committee.

HIGH-LEVEL SYMPOSIUM ON THE UNCSD: This Symposium, which took place from 8-9 September 2011 in Beijing, China, aimed to facilitate in-depth discussions among all relevant stakeholders on both the objective and the two themes of Rio+20, in order to formulate concrete proposals as a contribution to preparations for the UNCSD. Participants emphasized five new and emerging issues for "priority attention": energy access, security, and sustainability; food security and sustainable agriculture; water scarcity and sound water management; improved resilience and disaster preparedness; and land and soil degradation and sustainable land management. On the IFSD, participants highlighted that reforms should be guided by a set of principles, including: agreement on core problems to be addressed; form should follow function and substance; any reform should not only improve integration of the three pillars of sustainable development, but restore the balance among these pillars; enhancing transparency; and embracing complexity by simplifying administration, implementation and compliance arrangements.

UNCSD ARAB REGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETING: This meeting took place from 16-17 October 2011, in Cairo, Egypt. On the green economy, delegates highlighted the lack of a universal definition and agreed to identify the green economy as a tool for sustainable development rather than as a new principle that might replace sustainable development. Some participants raised concerns that the green economy concept might add constraints on the development or socioeconomic requirements of their countries and the recommendations from this meeting spell conditions for the use of any future green economy concept.

Regarding the IFSD, many delegates brought their national experiences to the table, with some explaining, for example, that they have or are in the process of establishing national sustainable development councils. Some said they could not discuss the international options in detail until the proposals and their financial implications are fully fleshed out.

During the conference, participants highlighted the need for balance among the three pillars of sustainable development. The meeting also featured the very active engagement of Major Groups. The conclusions will be submitted to the Rio+20 Preparatory Committee.

UNCSD REGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETING FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC: This meeting took place from 19-20 October 2011, in Seoul, Republic of Korea. During the

meeting, participants shared their views on the main themes of the UNCSO. On green economy, although many found merit in the idea, some participants expressed concern about the concept, noting that a green economy should not lead to protectionism or trade conditionalities. Others noted that a “one-size-fits-all” approach will not be successful due to countries’ unique circumstances.

Most participants noted that there is a need to strengthen the IFSD. While many favored “strengthening” UNEP, there was no consensus on whether this should be done through transforming UNEP into a specialized agency. Some participants also expressed interest and support for establishing a Sustainable Development Council. Participants adopted the “Seoul Outcome,” which will be submitted to the Rio+20 Preparatory Committee.

UNCSO REGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETING FOR AFRICA: This meeting took place in conjunction with the seventh session of the Committee on Food Security and Sustainable Development from 20-25 October 2011, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Most participants agreed on the need for strengthened IFSD. While there was some opposition to the idea of transforming UNEP into a specialized agency, all participants agreed on the need to strengthen the organization. Delegates supported the concept of green economy, with the caveat that it needs more definition. They agreed that transitioning to a green economy should not result in protectionism or trade conditionalities, there is a need for enabling environments, and sustainable land management should be a part of the green economy framework.

On means of implementation, delegates committed themselves to a number of objectives including ensuring improved environmental governance, transparency and accountability. They also called on the international community to meet existing commitments, such as the need to double aid to Africa.

REPORT OF THE MEETING

Jan Kubiš, Executive Secretary, UN Economic Commission for Europe, opened the meeting on Thursday morning, 1 December 2011. He noted the presence of over 350 participants and acknowledged that a number of planned side events would also enrich the delegates’ discussion and the outcome of the meeting. He welcomed excellent cooperation with the Bureau of the UNCSO Preparatory Process.

Kubiš commented on the current financial, economic and solvency crises, which have constrained budgetary resources for social and environmental issues, reduced political support for structural changes, and have had an impact on assistance to developing countries striving to meet the MDGs. Emphasizing the need to counter these trends with strong political commitment, he described the positive outcome of the Seventh “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference in Astana (21-23 September 2011). The Ministerial Conference had emphasized various facets of a green economy, including payment for natural resources, public procurement, altering consumption habits and going beyond the traditional concept of gross domestic product

(GDP) as a measure of prosperity. Kubiš also drew attention to the UN interagency report, “From Transition to Transformation: Sustainable and Inclusive Development in Europe and Central Asia,” which he described as a good example of UNECE/UNDP cooperation. On the report’s findings, he stressed the need for more social equity and inclusiveness and strengthening of interregional cooperation and governance.

Sha Zukang, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs and Secretary-General of Rio+20, noted the current economic climate and called on participants to lay the foundations for long-term sustainable prosperity. Reviewing the compilation of submissions for the UNCSO, he noted that some contributors had identified new themes for consideration, including approaches to the measurement of sustainability and innovative finance, and cross-cutting issues such as sustainable consumption and production and gender mainstreaming. On the green economy, he noted divergent views and added that current proposals are leaning towards the possibility of defining an inclusive green economy roadmap that each country could use to chart its own path to sustainable development, and the development of aspirational sustainable development goals. On the IFSD, he said various proposals address the strengthening of UNEP, creation of a Sustainable Development Council, or strengthening the Commission on Sustainable Development, ECOSOC and the UN regional commissions. He noted that a second Intersessional Meeting on the UNCSO will take place in New York on 15-16 December 2011, where participants will comment on the structure, format and content of a draft outcome document for Rio. He noted the importance of reaching agreement and looked forward to the emergence of the first UNCSO draft text for negotiation—or “zero draft”—by mid-January 2012.

Michele Candotti, Chief of the Executive Office, UNEP, acknowledged the importance of the Seventh “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference. He highlighted the environmental challenges outlined in the forthcoming UNEP Global Environmental Outlook (GEO-5) report. He said changes are required to facilitate a shift away from the “silo mentality” in approaching the three pillars of sustainable development and governance if a green economy is to be promoted. He outlined the need to define a green economy roadmap and strengthen the environmental pillar of sustainable development.

Jens Wandel, Deputy Regional Director and Director of the UNDP Bratislava Regional Center, focused on social equity and transforming societies and economies from a dependence on natural resources to human resources. He said the “green race” will make countries more competitive and reflected on ways to provide universal access to energy through renewable energy, on phasing out fossil fuel subsidies, which benefit the poor least, and on the importance of a social protection floor and partnerships.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS: Kubiš invited the meeting to adopt the agenda (E/ECE/RPM/2011/1). The meeting then elected Co-Chairs by acclamation: Janusz Zaleski, Under-

Secretary of State, Ministry of the Environment, Poland, and Ruslan Bultrikov, Vice-Minister, Ministry for Environment Protection, Kazakhstan.

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENTS: Co-Chair Bultrikov recalled Kazakhstan's proposal at the UN General Assembly for a Green Bridge Partnership to take forward discussions at Rio+20 on the transition to a green economy by, *inter alia*, addressing the need for a stable investment environment and the creation of green jobs. He highlighted that the aim of the RPM is to identify the specific challenges and priorities of the UNECE region with regard to Rio+20, including policy recommendations and good practices. The RPM will address: assessment of progress in the implementation of outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development and new and emerging challenges; a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication; and the institutional framework for sustainable development (IFSD). He said the results of the RPM, in the form of a Co-Chairs' summary, will be transmitted to and presented at the second Intersessional Meeting of the UNCSD Preparatory Committee in New York on 15-16 December 2011.

Co-Chair Zaleski highlighted the interactive way in which the meeting will conduct its panel and roundtable discussions and drew attention to the RPM organization of work (E/ECE/RPM/2011/INF/1).

DISCUSSION ONE: ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OUTCOMES OF THE MAJOR SUMMITS ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ADDRESSING NEW AND EMERGING CHALLENGES

Co-Chair Zaleski introduced the questions to be addressed at a panel discussion on the major sustainable summits and invited a panel of speakers to deliver keynote contributions. Participants were asked to address: major achievements in the region since the 1992 Rio Conference and efforts needed to make further progress; and emerging challenges in the region and policies and measures required to effectively address them.

Professor Bedrich Moldan, Professor of Environmental Science, Director of the Environment Centre of the Charles University, Czech Republic, and Vice-Chair of the Preparatory Committee Bureau for Rio+20, said the UNECE had helped define responses to sustainable development through such initiatives as Regional Environmental Centers. He emphasized the need to monitor and assess progress on sustainable development.

Taulant Bino, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration, Albania, outlined the need to implement an integrated approach to environmental management. He noted that Rio+20 presents an excellent opportunity to move towards the green economy.

Fitz Holzwarth, Deputy Director General, Water Management, Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, Germany, emphasized the need for global rather than sectoral outlooks and reported on the Bonn Conference on the Water, Energy and Food Security Nexus. He also highlighted the importance of a green economy roadmap that is inclusive and

that takes into account transboundary considerations, considers the needs of countries in transition, and focuses on poverty eradication and sustainable development.

Jan Dusík, Deputy Director and Officer-in-Charge, UNEP Regional Office for Europe, presented key elements of the report "From Rio to Rio+20 (1992-2012): Keeping track of our changing environment." He gave an overview of emerging issues UNEP should focus on for Rio+20 such as the alignment of governance with global sustainability challenges.

Srdan Matić, Coordinator, Environment and Health, World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for Europe, said that health is one of the core objectives of sustainable development and that Rio+20 offers an opportunity to reexamine the integral linkages. He underscored the necessity of health indicators as a measure of progress on sustainable development.

Sascha Gabizon, Executive Director of Women in Europe for a Common Future, said that women still form a majority of the poor. She presented Women's priorities for Rio+20 including: the need to work with economic indicators that take women and gender into account; the necessity of a social protection floor during the transition to a green economy; and the need for a legally binding mechanism for decommissioning nuclear power plants.

Professor Amy Edmondson, Harvard Business School, underlined the need to consider sustainable urban development as a top priority at Rio+20. She proposed to replace references to "Smart Cities" with references to "Living Cities," emphasizing the importance of using appropriate and inclusive terminology to promote positive attention and help build confidence.

DISCUSSION: Co-Chair Zaleski introduced the discussion by outlining major achievements in the European region since 1992, the efforts needed for further progress, the emerging challenges in the region and policies and measures to effectively address them.

During the discussion, many participants expressed views on the UNECE regional experience regarding the Rio+20 preparatory process. The European Union focused on the successful operation of the three Rio Conventions (climate, biodiversity and desertification). He noted the wide consensus achieved at CSD-19 on the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production and advocated its adoption in Rio. He stressed that decisions in Rio should be based on democratic development and respect for human rights. The US called for Rio+20 to, *inter alia*, prioritize the ability of countries to monitor progress and inform the decision-making process and employ a flexible and realistic approach regarding challenges. She called for measures to stimulate innovation and attract private investment. She said the US is not prepared to endorse a roadmap for the green economy and called for strengthening UNEP's efficiency and resources rather than its transformation into a new environmental organization.

Turkey urged that Rio+20 adopt a concise document with a vision and the elaboration of new sustainable development goals. Switzerland referred to good practices in the European region, especially in the UNECE regional conventions. He suggested

that the conventions could serve as models for other regions, citing, in particular, the Aarhus Convention and the prospect for its universal application. Norway stressed energy access, food security, green procurement, creating jobs, and bringing in the private sector. The United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction proposed taking into account, in sustainable development planning, the cost of possible disasters.

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

On Thursday afternoon, Co-Chair Bultrikov introduced a discussion on the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication. It began with a plenary comprising a series of keynote addresses followed by a two-hour multi-stakeholder roundtable organized in two parallel roundtable sessions. The Co-Chair introduced four questions for discussion in plenary and in the two roundtables: (a) What policy mixes have the potential to achieve a green, inclusive and competitive economy over the short-, medium- and long-term, and what role does regional cooperation play in this respect? (b) Which support measures should countries take to address the socioeconomic impacts of structural change arising from the transition to a green economy? (c) What are the most promising models for engaging business in building a green economy? and (d) In which areas can the region share good practices and lessons learned to contribute to a global green economy?

In his keynote address, Paolo Soprano, Director of the Sustainable Development Division, Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea, Italy, and Vice-Chair of the Preparatory Committee Bureau for Rio+20, outlined the importance of a tool box to implement concrete actions towards a green economy. He mentioned key elements to consider when preparing the transition to a green economy including changes to current sustainable consumption and production patterns, the importance of the business sector and of public-private partnerships.

Niyazi Safarov, Deputy Minister of Economic Development, Azerbaijan, said, *inter alia*, environmental protection should go hand in hand with economic development and that the implementation of a green economy requires state support, a legislative basis and funding.

Daniel Ziegerer, Head of Global Section, Federal Office for the Environment, Switzerland, proposed elements of a green economy roadmap including: a vision, principles of implementation, target and timelines, a monitoring and review mechanism and a tool box. He stressed the importance of the green economy as a means to implement sustainable development. He said that a green economy roadmap should address, *inter alia*, an enabling environment and specific sectors, and that initiatives such as public-private partnerships can help implement the concept.

Björn Stigson, President of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, Business Action for Sustainable Development 2012, said the main challenge is to change the

pace of implementation, and strong partnerships are needed with key actors, notably governments and civil society. He also highlighted the role of business as a solution provider.

Peter Poschen, Director, Job Creation and Sustainable Enterprise Department, International Labor Organization, urged greening across all sectors and seizing the opportunity for social inclusion. He suggested that a green economy is not sufficient for job creation, and measures to compensate poor households facing price rises, such as raising revenue from eco-taxation, should be considered.

Talaybek Makeyev, Executive Director, Regional Environmental Center for Asia, focused on challenges in the countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus, in particular, inefficient resource use and an inability to achieve the MDGs. He highlighted water productivity, the Astana Green Bridge initiative, and Europe's Environment Assessment of Assessments project.

Joachim Spangenberg, Director of Sustainable Europe Research Institute, Germany, speaking on behalf of NGOs, suggested capping resource use through taxation and limitations on volume of extraction, establishing a fund for buying technology to be placed in the public domain, and the creation of a corporate accountability convention in Rio. He called for respect for non-economic values and affirmed the primacy of human needs regardless of purchasing power. The EU reaffirmed that one of the main outcomes of Rio should be a roadmap for a green economy. He also highlighted fisheries, oceans and chemicals, and urged a robust international support framework.

ROUNDTABLE ONE: Sylvie Lemmet, Director of the Division of Technology, Industry and Economics, UNEP, introduced this roundtable discussion guided by the four questions presented at the beginning of the plenary session. Lemmet invited participants to consider the first question on policy mixes and regional cooperation. Discussants identified the need for binding targets, in particular, for energy efficiency, programmes that extend beyond the "political life" or electoral mandates of politicians, and the use of Strategic Environmental Assessment. Canada cited the need to make an economic case for taking action, including costing inaction and valuing natural capital and environmental goods and services.

On developing countries, a number of participants called for international assistance, long transition periods and support for their technology-, finance- and capacity-building needs. There were calls for South-South cooperation to support the transfer of Southern solutions through regional hubs that can pave the way for new partnerships. Farmers said there could be no green economy alongside poverty, inequity and excessive consumption. Business and Industry underlined the need to consider policies that foster real connections rather than stress "false separations" of society and the economy, and government and civil society. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) outlined an approach to sustainable financing in the water sector, using revenues from tariffs, taxes and fiscal transfers to help those who cannot afford to pay.

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development suggested that International Financial Institutions (IFIs) either do not have the capacity or cannot be bothered to implement appropriate measures to advance the green economy. He added that an ethic of responsibility should inform investment decisions at IFIs and urged that the on-going revision of financial policies and frameworks in many countries be used to promote responsible investment policies. Responding to the discussion, Brice Lalonde, Executive Coordinator for Rio+20, said he would welcome IFIs in Rio and praised an agreement in the UN Statistical Division on how to relate sectors of the economy with regard to their impact on the environment.

On support measures to address the socioeconomic impacts of structural change, UNDP underlined the need to collaborate with sectors, including the private sector, in order for the poor and the most vulnerable to have access to technology and microfinance. He also stressed the importance of social inclusion to facilitate the transition towards a green economy. Children and Youth identified the need for strong education for sustainable development that targets the whole education community, including the non-formal education sector.

On models to engage business in building a green economy, the Global Reporting Initiative proposed to consider a roadmap or a global policy framework to help private companies incorporate sustainable development into their reporting cycle. France suggested, *inter alia*, the adoption of a mix of instruments to involve the private sector in the green economy and consideration of a multi-stakeholder platform such as the Marrakech process to include this sector in decision-making. Switzerland outlined the need to focus on public-private partnerships and to encourage business to use more harmonized models for reporting on sustainable development activities.

On areas where regions could share good practice and lessons learned, the Ukrainian National Environmental NGO MAMA-86 highlighted the importance of the UNECE conventions such as the Espoo Convention. Women cautioned about the health impacts of nuclear power plants in the region and requested the exclusion of the nuclear industry from any green economy roadmap.

ROUNDTABLE TWO: The second roundtable, conducted in parallel to the first, was facilitated by Scott Foster, Director, Sustainable Energy Division, UNECE. Again participants addressed the four questions outlined at the beginning of the plenary. Most emphasized the involvement of business for a green economy to succeed but stressed that governments have to provide an enabling environment. The US suggested that green economy should not be regarded as an end state or as a substitution for sustainable development. He stressed the importance of energy efficiency, renewable energy, voluntary and regulatory standards, resource productivity and research. Germany proposed that the Rio+20 conference should not be regarded as an event for the signing of conventions but rather as an opportunity for endorsing a political commitment to speed up

transition to a low carbon economy. He stressed that the EU is proposing a set of tools and a simple mechanism for countries to make the transition to a green economy at different speeds.

A number of other participants supported the idea of a green economy roadmap, including at the national level, and constraints on economic growth. Others called for increased regional cooperation, good governance, establishing new indicators for monitoring an effective green economy, and deployment of new technologies, with Belarus urging countries to avoid trade discrimination in transferring environmentally friendly technologies. On the shift to sustainable consumption and production patterns, the WHO stressed healthy consumption. The International Council for Science called for the adoption of the notion of inclusive wealth covering all forms of capital, and harnessing science and technology across all sectors.

DISCUSSION THREE: THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

On Friday morning delegates participated in the third and final thematic discussion, on the institutional framework for sustainable development. This segment was chaired by Janusz Zaleski, Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of the Environment, Poland. He offered several questions to guide discussion: (a) How can sustainable development be effectively reflected in financial and economic decision-making at the national level and how can intersectoral cooperation and decision-making be enhanced? (b) How can the Major Groups effectively engage in decision-making processes at the national level? (c) How can progress towards sustainable development be measured effectively? and (d) How can countries' efforts be best supported through regional cooperation? Zaleski then invited panelists to deliver keynote addresses.

Tania Valerie Raguz, First Secretary of the Permanent Mission of Croatia to the United Nations, Vice-Chair of the Bureau for the UNCSD Preparatory Committee, voiced concern about inadequate implementation of sustainable development commitments and a fragmented approach to multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) in particular. She noted progress in defining institutional options, *inter alia*, upgrading UNEP to a specialized agency, improving the work of the CSD and ECOSOC, establishing a Sustainable Development Council, strengthening the mandates of regional economic commissions and reactivating national sustainable development councils.

Rodion Bajureanu, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Environment, Republic of Moldova, reported on national activities aimed at promoting preparations for Rio+20. He also drew attention to the recent Chisinau Declaration adopted at the Fourth Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention, emphasizing that the Aarhus Convention could serve as a model for other countries as a practical application of Rio Principle 10. He stressed that both the Aarhus Convention and its protocol are open for global accession.

Jean Pierre Thebault, Ambassador for Environment, France, said that existing institutions have not responded to the challenges of sustainable development. He stressed approaches that lend legitimacy to the voice of civil society, including

the regional dimension, citing the Aarhus Convention as a positive example. He suggested that UNEP be transformed into a specialized agency based in Nairobi, that countries address weaknesses in the CSD, and that a Sustainable Development Council will better reflect political will.

Bradnee Chambers, Head of Environmental Law and Governance Branch, Team Leader, International Environmental Governance/Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development, UNEP, questioned the separate administration of MEAs and proposed that the system could be simplified and less fragmented, following the example of synergizing the three chemicals conventions. He said the approach to chemicals MEAs has led to financial savings.

Goran Svilanovic, Coordinator of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Economic and Environmental Activities, described his work on the security aspect of environmental and human rights issues. He called for Rio+20 to recognize the security dimension of sustainable development. He described the Aarhus Convention as a unique tool in promoting citizens' rights and supporting environmental governance at the local level.

Jeremy Wates, Director of the European Environment Bureau, called for an international treaty on environmental impact assessment, and supported a proposal from Brazil for a global treaty on environmental democracy (Rio Principle 10). He urged that countries that did not support such a treaty should at least not prevent others from moving ahead.

Angelika Poth-Mögele, Director of Policy, Council of European Municipalities and Regions, highlighted the role of local governments in implementing sustainable development decisions. She lent support to proposals to transform UNEP into a specialized agency and upgrade the CSD to a Sustainable Development Council.

DISCUSSION: Co-Chair Zaleski opened the discussion to the floor, guided by his four questions. The US said it was unfortunate that panellists had advocated "self-interested" positions. On the participation of Major Groups, he said that he had called for the Rio+20 Bureau to have a seat at the table for Major Group representation in the UNCSD process. He called for the use of new information technologies to facilitate participation at Rio+20. The Scientific and Technological Community called for an additional mandate for research and scientific advice. Switzerland, with Children and Youth, called for civil society participation at Bureau level.

On measuring sustainable development, the Scientific and Technological Community underlined the role of independent evaluation. Italy noted that GDP growth does not automatically imply poverty eradication. Switzerland proposed that the UNCSD draw on the UN's experience with the MDGs when considering SDGs. NGOs called for a replacement of GDP with holistic indicators that incorporate welfare and culture.

On the UNCSD outcome, the US said he was pressing for a limited inter-governmental outcome, a succinct political document on implementation roles. Canada also favored a focus on implementation. On the Aarhus Convention and other means

of promoting access to environmental information and public participation, the US said he did not envisage the launch of a new negotiating process.

On institutional reform, Switzerland called for the replacement of the CSD with a Global Sustainability Council as a subsidiary body of the UN General Assembly. NGOs described current structures as inadequate, obsolete and fragmented. Turkey called for a role for IFIs in resourcing sustainable development. Workers and Trade Unions called for an international financial transactions tax to fund sustainable development. Norway called for a UN system-wide strategy to improve the use of existing resources. Women called for sustainable development governance at the highest level of the UN. NGOs, supported by Children and Youth, called for the creation of an ombudsperson for future generations.

On UNEP and institutional reform, the US opposed renegotiation of UNEP's mandate and cautioned that such a negotiation could result in a weakening of its current mandate. He suggested ways to upgrade UNEP's role within its current mandate. He questioned the premise that creating a new organization leads to a consolidation of decision-making and, challenged by Switzerland, questioned the argument that consolidation within the UN leads to cost savings, citing the example of the chemical conventions. Italy called for an ambitious programme of reform in the UN system, focusing on ECOSOC, CSD and UNGA. Switzerland called for an anchor institution and said universal membership of the Governing Council would strengthen UNEP's authority in providing overarching policy guidance on MEA issues. On UNEP, Norway supported universal membership, the establishment of an Executive Board, and improved funding.

Serbia called for a new UN agency based on UNEP structures to coordinate MEAs. With Turkey and Lichtenstein, he supported the creation of a Sustainable Development Council. Turkey called for strengthening UNEP and the CSD. The EU, Italy, Children and Youth, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Lichtenstein and Montenegro supported upgrading UNEP to the status of a specialized agency within the UN system.

On the green economy, the EU called for a link to the discussion on effective multilateral institutions. The Russian Federation supported using green growth as a strategic principle and cautioned against creating barriers to international trade. The UNFPA called for consideration of population dynamics.

CLOSING SESSION

At the opening of the closing session on Friday afternoon, Co-Chair Zaleski gave the floor to Maria Luisa Escorel, Deputy Permanent Representative of Brazil to the UN.

Escorel shared the host country's views on Rio+20. She said it should aim at the permanent incorporation of the goal of eradicating extreme poverty; full integration of sustainable development across all activities thus overcoming sectoral approaches; multilateralism and adapting the UN to the challenge of sustainable development; and redefinition of the world order with regard to the positioning of countries in global governance.

She stressed that there should be no regression on previous commitments, and that Rio+20 should look to the future, not the past. Speaking of the green economy, she emphasized that it should be an instrument to achieve sustainable development without favoring the commercialization of technological solutions over the needs of developing countries, and that Rio+20 should adopt the broader concept of an inclusive green economy. She called for the creation of a permanent high-level mechanism to coordinate sustainable development institutions, adding that the present crisis is an opportunity to enhance coherence.

Co-Chair Zaleski invited Brice Lalonde, Executive Coordinator of Rio+20, to address the meeting. Lalonde highlighted elements to consider for Rio+20 including new accounting methods, eradication of poverty, improved cooperation, financial flows, global issues, and animals in the context of biodiversity and farming. He stressed the need for action from national governments, emphasizing that action does not start at the UN but at the national level.

Co-Chair Zaleski then invited delegates to take a fifteen-minute break to examine an unedited copy of the Co-Chairs' summary of the meeting (E/ECE/RPM/2011/1/Add.1).

Sha Zukang, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs and Secretary-General of Rio+20, acknowledged the diverse spectrum of views in the region and thanked participants for their candor, which will enable serious negotiation. He noted that each country faces unique challenges on the path to a green economy, and any roadmap would have to accommodate this. Recalling the strong interest in addressing governance structures, he recalled that nobody had challenged the view that UNEP should be streamlined and strengthened, and that the IFSD would have to be addressed at all levels, both vertically and horizontally. Secretary-General Sha also commented on support for Sustainable Development Goals and urged governments to move early to address the tough decisions in pursuit of sustainable development if they want to avoid leaving a planet in peril, an economy in crisis and a world torn by conflict. He urged participants to use Rio+20 as a guide towards a new way of living, sustainable consumption and production, and a sustainable world. He said that Brazil, the Rio+20 host country, is working on specific arrangements to ensure broad participation by Major Groups in thematic events, parallel events and side events. He congratulated the UNECE for having successfully organized the RPM and thanked participants for their significant contributions.

Co-Chair Zaleski then invited comments from the floor on the Co-Chairs' summary. Several countries made textual suggestions. Montenegro, Turkey and NGOs asked that the text reflect a distinction between economies in transition and other economies.

The US observed that the Aarhus Convention is not the only way to implement Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration. He also suggested clarifying the text to show that a green economy will be a means to achieve and not a replacement for sustainable development. The US said that the text did not reflect its specific views on various aspects of the green economy and the IFSD.

In closing, Co-Chair Bultrikov said that the Secretariat would take into account the comments and interventions from the floor when finalizing the Co-Chairs' Summary. He informed participants that the Secretariat would finalize the Co-Chairs' summary as well as a factual report of the meeting and the list of participants after the RPM and post these documents on the meeting's website. He also indicated that the Co-Chairs' Summary would be sent to the UNCSD Secretariat as an input for the Rio+20 Compilation Document and would be presented at the UNCSD second Intersessional Meeting in New York on 15-16 December 2011. He thanked all the participants and the interpreters for their work and closed the meeting at 5:31 pm.

CO-CHAIRS' SUMMARY OF THE REGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETING

The introduction to the summary describes the opening statements by executive officers of the UNECE, UNCSD, UNEP and UNDP. It outlines the thrust of the discussion and singles out some of the key points and background reports. It references the Seventh "Environment for Europe" Ministerial meeting in Astana, and notes progress on sustainable development in the region as well as the outstanding concerns.

On assessment of progress in the implementation of the outcomes of major summits on sustainable development and addressing new and emerging challenges, the summary highlights:

- the "Green Bridge" Interregional Partnership Programme;
 - outstanding environmental concerns in the region and equity as a foundation of sustainable development;
 - the need to come to a consensus on targets and goals, including SDGs;
 - a green economy roadmap with goals, objectives and actions at the international level, which produced a divergence of views;
 - gender, a social protection floor, the health and development linkage;
 - monitoring progress in achieving sustainable development, including a move beyond GDP as a measure of prosperity and recognition of natural capital;
 - promoting cross-sectoral approaches, especially in the water, energy and food security nexus;
 - the role of economic instruments, including taxes, green procurement and phasing out perverse subsidies, especially for fossil fuel;
 - stakeholder participation in decision-making processes in relation to Rio Principle 10 and the Aarhus Convention;
 - energy efficiency and security, and access to sustainable energy for the poor, as well as the importance of resource efficiency and innovation;
 - inclusion of disaster risk reduction in development strategies; and
 - the region's progress in implementing multilateral environmental agreements, and the importance of UNECE processes and its regional conventions and other initiatives.
- On the green economy, the summary notes:
- levels of support for an internationally agreed Green Economy

- roadmap, with political and action-oriented components, setting a vision for two decades;
- policy mixes for a green, inclusive and competitive economy and the role played by regional cooperation; avoiding a one-size-fits-all approach;
- active involvement of stakeholders, democratic and transparent societies and education;
- the need for a fundamental change in consumption and production patterns, including the need to reduce absolute levels of resource consumption and adoption of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes for Sustainable Consumption and Production;
- addressing poverty and social inclusion, access to technology, microfinance, unemployment and complementary labor market policies to meet the disruption caused by a transition to a green economy; social protection floors, education and skills development;
- analytical work to better understand and communicate the benefits of a green economy compared to business as usual;
- promoting innovation and new technologies for sustainable development, with the possibility of a technology pool for the transfer of technologies;
- the role of official development assistance (ODA) and IFIs for enabling necessary investments;
- engaging the private sector, public-private partnerships and public procurement;
- MEAs and making full use of the UNECE-serviced conventions (e.g., Strategic Environmental Assessment Protocol; the Aarhus Convention) and their role in paving the way for a green economy;
- energy efficiency and security, with some delegates calling for exclusion of nuclear energy from the green economy;
- prioritizing water and sanitation; and
- importance of data and indicators for assessing progress towards green growth; balancing the right of countries to define their own indicators and the need for international comparability.

On the institutional framework for sustainable development, the summary describes:

- current weaknesses related to implementation, fragmentation and coordination, and the need to improve the international institutional architecture, as well as at the regional, national and local levels;
- lack of agreement on institutional options at the global level, the expressed need to strengthen UNEP, the CSD and ECOSOC, with some delegations preferring to transform UNEP into a specialized agency and some mentioning the creation of a Sustainable Development Council possibly to undertake a periodic review for sustainable development and that could subsume the CSD; and others calling for a World Environment Court;
- creating an intergovernmental panel on sustainable development modeled on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES);

- elaborating an international convention on sustainability/strategic environmental assessment possibly based on the UNECE Espoo Convention and its Protocol;
- negotiating an international convention based on the Aarhus Convention to operationalize Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration and accession of non-UNECE member states to the Aarhus Convention;
- strengthening the mandates of the UN regional commissions and improving regional cooperation, including in the context of promoting peace and security;
- embedding integration in national decision-making and re-establishing national sustainable development councils, and whole government approaches;
- the establishment of ombudspersons for future generations at the national/international level;
- the important role played by local governments; and
- engaging Major Groups, with one such group advocating co-management at the Bureau level within the new institutional framework for sustainable development.

The edited version of the Co-Chairs' summary will be posted on the UNECE website (<http://www.unece.org/env/sustainabledevelopment/rpm2011/rpm2011.html>) following the meeting.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

For additional meetings leading up to the Rio+20 conference, go to the UNCSO homepage <http://www.uncsd2012.org/> or IISD's Sustainable Development Policy and Practice knowledgebase <http://uncsd.iisd.org/>

Eye on Earth Summit: The Eye on Earth Summit: Pursuing a Vision is being organized under the theme "Dynamic system to keep the world environmental situation under review." This event will launch the global environmental information network (EIN) strengthening initiative and address major policy and technical issues. **dates:** 12-15 December 2011 **location:** Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates **contact:** Marije Heurter, Eye on Earth Event Coordinator **tel:** +971 2 693 4516 **email:** marije.heurter@ead.ae or Eoecommunity@ead.ae **www:** <http://www.eyeonearthsummit.org/>

Second Intersessional Meeting for UNCSO: The second intersessional meeting for the UNCSO will be convened in December 2011. **dates:** 15-16 December 2011 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UNCSO Secretariat **email:** uncsd2012@un.org **www:** <http://www.uncsd2012.org/>

UNCSO Informal Consultations: The UNCSO Preparatory Committee will hold a series of informal discussions and negotiations on the zero draft of the outcome document in January, February, March and April 2012. **dates:** 16-18 January 2012; 13-17 February 2012; 19-23 March 2012 and 30 April - 4 May 2012 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UNCSO Secretariat **email:** uncsd2012@un.org **www:** <http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/>

Fifth World Future Energy Summit: The fifth World Future Energy Summit will concentrate on energy innovation and policy implementation, technology development, finance and

investment approaches, and existing and upcoming projects. The Summit will seek to set the scene for future energy discussions in 2012 with leading international speakers from government, industry, academia and finance, to share insights, expertise and cutting edge advances in technology. **dates:** 16-19 January 2012 **location:** Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates **contact:** Naji El Haddad **phone:** +971-2-409-0499 **email:** naji.haddad@reedexpo.ae **www:** <http://www.worldfutureenergysummit.com/>

12th Special Session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum: The Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) will hold its 12th special session to focus on the UNCSD themes of green economy and international environmental governance and emerging issues. **dates:** 20-22 February 2012 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **contact:** Jamil Ahmad, UNEP **phone:** +254-20-762-3411 **fax:** +254-20 762-3929 **email:** sgc.sgb@unep.org **www:** <http://www.unep.org/resources/gov/>

GLOBE 2012: GLOBE 2012 is hosted by the GLOBE Foundation, as part of its collaboration with the UN Environment Programme Finance Initiative (UNEP FI), to offer platforms for thinking, dialogue and action by the worldwide financial services and investment community in preparation for the UNCSD. The aim of the meeting and of the overall collaboration with UNEP FI is to enhance communication among bankers, insurers and investors to achieve a sustainable finance environment where responsible investment is a priority, and to provide opportunities for discussing a roadmap to a financially sustainable economy. **dates:** 14-16 March 2012 **location:** Vancouver, Canada **contact:** Globe Foundation **phone:** +1-604-695-5001 **fax:** +1-604-695-5019 **email:** info@globeseries.com **www:** <http://2012.globeseries.com/>

Planet Under Pressure: New Knowledge toward Solutions: This conference will focus on solutions to the global sustainability challenge. The conference will discuss solutions to move societies on to a sustainable pathway and provide scientific leadership towards the UNCSD. **dates:** 26-29 March 2012 **location:** London, United Kingdom **contact:** Jenny Wang **phone:** +86-10-8520-8796 **email:** Jen.wang@elsevier.com **www:** <http://www.planetunderpressure2012.net>

Third Intersessional Meeting for UNCSD: The final intersessional meeting for the UNCSD will be convened in March 2012. **dates:** 26-27 March 2012 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UNCSD Secretariat **email:** uncsd2012@un.org **www:** <http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/>

UNCTAD XIII: The 13th Session of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD XIII) will be held in April 2012 on the theme: Development-centered globalization: Towards inclusive and sustainable growth and development. **dates:** 21-26 April 2012 **location:** Doha, Qatar **contact:** UNCTAD Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-1234 **fax:** +41-22-917-0057 **email:** info@unctad.org **www:** <http://www.unctad.org>

Third PrepCom for UNCSD: The third meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the UNCSD will take place in Brazil just prior to the conference. **dates:** 13-15 June 2012 **location:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazil **contact:** UNCSD Secretariat **email:** uncsd2012@un.org **www:** <http://www.uncsd2012.org/>

UN Conference on Sustainable Development: The UNCSD will mark the 20th anniversary of the UN Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit), which convened in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992. **dates:** 20-22 June 2012 **location:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazil **contact:** UNCSD Secretariat **email:** uncsd2012@un.org **www:** <http://www.uncsd2012.org/>

GLOSSARY

CSD	Commission on Sustainable Development
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
GDP	Gross domestic product
IFI	International Financial Institution
IFSD	Institutional framework for sustainable development
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MEAs	Multilateral environmental agreements
Rio+20	United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (or UNCSD)
RPM	Regional Preparatory Meeting
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UNCSD	United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (or Rio+20)
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development