

UNCS D INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS: WEDNESDAY, 21 MARCH 2012

UNCS D delegates began their first reading of Section V (Framework for Action and Follow-up) of the zero draft. Consultations and side events also took place throughout the day.

CONSULTATIONS ON THE ZERO DRAFT

V. FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION AND FOLLOW-UP:

Pakistan, for the G-77/CHINA, called for splitting this section into two: framework for action (Section V); and means of implementation (MOI) (Section VI). He said Rio+20 is about assessing and addressing gaps in implementation. He proposed moving references to the private sector from Section V to provisions on Major Groups in Section II. The EU stressed that the first subsection of Section V should focus on international action, be action-oriented and focused with clear targets and timelines.

MEXICO suggested focusing on priority issues where Rio+20 can make a difference. SWITZERLAND agreed with the EU about Rio+20 not focusing primarily on identifying gaps. The US and CANADA reiterated the need for a short document, and the US suggested that commitments be reflected in a compendium of commitments rather than in Section V. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA said the outcome document should consider partnerships for sustainable development.

On paragraph 63, on progress in implementation, the G-77/CHINA proposed text on poverty eradication stressing, *inter alia*, that it is the overarching objective of the G-77/CHINA for the conference. The EU said “sustainable, sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth” is a goal for all countries, not only for developing countries. SWITZERLAND underlined the importance of food security, water and energy, and said poverty eradication should be a guiding theme, rather than being the focus of one subsection. JAPAN, NEW ZEALAND and CANADA said text on poverty eradication should be mainstreamed into the beginning of the document. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA suggested merging EU and Swiss proposals on food security, and urged that poverty eradication provisions give more attention to the role of sustainable and inclusive growth.

NEW ZEALAND agreed with focusing on priority areas where Rio+20 can make a difference, and supported a Swiss proposal to develop a short reference to the challenge on each issue in Section V, followed by action-oriented responses. NEW ZEALAND and the US agreed with the EU on deleting the G-77/China’s proposal to refer to the lack of implementation of Agenda 21.

NORWAY stressed the empowerment of women, environmental externalities and a social protection floor. He did not support the G-77/China’s proposal to convene a high-level meeting of the General Assembly centered on a review process devoted to poverty eradication. CANADA supported Iceland’s proposal on gender equality and empowerment of women.

On food security, the G-77/CHINA explained proposals they added to the document regarding, *inter alia*, the right to food and to development, micro-credit, micro-finance, gender, volatility of commodity prices, sustainable fisheries and small farmers. ISRAEL emphasized equipping farmers with tools and equipment for productivity, research and the role of women.

On paragraph 64, on the right to food, the EU supported Bangladesh’s proposal on nutrition for children. SWITZERLAND proposed calling for the Committee on World Food Security to strengthen policy convergence among stakeholders. NORWAY supported the EU’s proposal on prioritizing an integrated and coherent approach to sustainable and resource efficient agriculture, and Iceland’s proposal on the importance of sustainable fisheries.

On paragraph 65, on measures to stabilize food prices, ensure access to land, water and other resources, and social protection programmes, the EU bracketed Turkey’s proposal of “large-scale investment projects” and the G-77/China’s text on changing unsustainable consumption patterns in the lifestyles in developed countries. JAPAN highlighted the importance of diversity in crops and agricultural patterns. On the G-77/China’s proposed text about elimination of trade barriers, CANADA proposed a reference to “science-based standards to facilitate international trade in innovative agricultural products.”

The US said she would have to consult with her capital about text on a rights-based approach to food security, and suggested deleting text on, *inter alia*, equitable access to international markets and eliminating trade distorting barriers and sustainable resource-efficient, climate-resilient agriculture. The US and NEW ZEALAND proposed deleting a G-77/CHINA proposal on the right to development and right to food and proper nutrition. AUSTRALIA, CANADA, SWITZERLAND and LIECHTENSTEIN supported NORWAY’s proposal on good governance in land use and land-use planning. AUSTRALIA said proposals on fisheries should be combined with provisions on healthy marine environments. The US proposed deleting EU text on addressing excessive price volatility. The US and NEW ZEALAND reserved on a reference to Principles for Responsible Agriculture Investments, proposed by Switzerland.

On paragraph 66, on access to information and appropriate technology, the US proposed deleting the G-77/China text on the role of small farmers’ traditional seed supply systems,

and introduced text on the importance of women producers and consumers. The DOMINICAN REPUBLIC supported the G-77/CHINA's text on addressing volatility. JAPAN opposed references to pricing water for cost recovery. The G-77/CHINA stressed the need to link the right to water to other rights, such as the right to development. He underscored that gaps in implementation of the Agenda 21 and JPOI texts on water should be the lynchpin of the Rio+20 text on water.

The REPUBLIC OF KOREA supported EU proposals on achieving universal access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation, and on an integrated approach to sustainable water resource management. The US and CANADA proposed deleting a reference to safe drinking water and sanitation being a human right. ISRAEL stressed including language on desalination. On text proposed by the G-77/CHINA on the need to increase support for livestock production in developing countries, NEW ZEALAND and SWITZERLAND proposed replacing "livestock production" with "sustainable livestock production" and deleting "developing countries." SWITZERLAND supported, *inter alia*: a US proposal on strengthening investments in sustainable agricultural and food-systems research, innovation, and education; and a G-77/CHINA proposal on recognizing the role of indigenous communities and small farmers' traditional seed supply systems in developing countries.

On paragraph 67, on the importance of the right to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation, NEW ZEALAND supported an EU proposal on commitment to achieve universal access to safe drinking water.

On energy, the G-77/CHINA stressed energy access to all, use or increased use of renewable energy, the need for information on the Sustainable Energy for All Initiative, and developing a common agenda. The EU suggested text on: access to sustainable energy services to achieve the MDGs; the interdependence between energy, water and food security; and the importance of sustainable energy for gender equality.

On paragraph 70, on the Sustainable Energy for All initiative, the EU proposed at least doubling the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency by 2030. He supported a US proposal calling on governments to create enabling environments that facilitate private sector investment in clean and efficient energy technologies and Iceland's proposal to accelerate the evolution of renewable and efficient energy. The US supported Mexico's proposal to eradicate energy-poverty by 2030. JAPAN recommended each country establish low-carbon growth strategies. BELARUS supported Japan's text on reducing trade barriers against energy-efficient products. The US opposed text on regular reporting of expenditures and actions taken to reduce subsidies and harmonizing minimum standards and labels, among others. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA encouraged member states to adopt programmes such as the Minimum Energy Performance Standards. NORWAY said resources must come from the private sector, and suggested that foreign aid can mitigate risks for private investors. CANADA, on text related to a phase-out of fossil fuels subsidies, added "inefficient."

AUSTRALIA and CANADA supported Japan's proposal on low-carbon development through promotion of energy efficiency, renewable energy and clean energy. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION, BELARUS, TAJIKISTAN and the REPUBLIC OF KOREA supported Kazakhstan's proposal for developing a global energy-ecological strategy. KAZAKHSTAN, NORWAY and ICELAND supported a G-77/China paragraph on the role of energy in poverty eradication and social inclusion.

On sustainable tourism, the US, CANADA and NEW ZEALAND supported the G-77/China paragraph on recognizing the importance of sustainable tourism activities that conserve the environment, respect cultural diversity and improve the welfare of local people.

On sustainable transport, all speakers supported merging references to sustainable transport throughout the amended zero draft.

On harmony with nature, the US suggested inserting concepts from this proposed text in other parts of the zero draft. The EU suggested bringing together related provisions by the G-77/China, Mexico and US and merging them.

On cities, CANADA supported the US proposal on sustainable transportation. NEW ZEALAND recommended maintaining resilient ecosystem services. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA introduced its proposal on including greener buildings in city planning. The EU reserved on Japan's proposal to establish a platform to promote sustainable cities.

On health, the G-77/CHINA introduced its proposals for this section, which include calls for: a target date to overcome communicable diseases; an agreement on universal access to treatment and medical care for diseases; focusing on vulnerable groups, women and children; and affordable medicines including generic drugs. CANADA preferred Norway's proposals on health and sustainable development links and equitable and universal access to health services. The US preferred Switzerland's proposals on health linkages with environment and green economy and the role of the World Health Organization.

On cities, proposals for a new title included "Human Settlement, Sustainable Cities, Rural Development and Housing" (G-77/CHINA) and "Cities and metropolitan regions and opposed to extend it to rural development" (EU). The US suggested replacing "low carbon cities" with "sustainable cities" or "low emission cities." The G-77/CHINA identified slum prevention and upgrading as key elements.

On green jobs-social inclusion, the EU questioned the G-77/CHINA proposal for a global strategy on youth employment. The US noted that delegates' positions on green jobs here were different from general acceptance of the concept in ILO circles. LIECHTENSTEIN emphasized legal empowerment for achieving development and social inclusion. The EU, US and Japan proposed deleting the G-77/China proposal for UNGA consideration of a global social protection programme.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Delegates noted that two-thirds of the amendments on the final three sections of the zero draft remained to be reviewed and some pointed out that proposals related to over 10 specific priority areas had been added to the section on Framework for Action and Follow-up, as UNCSD negotiators settled in for another extended day of viewing amendments to the text on the overhead screens while negotiating groups and delegations described and amended various proposals. Many wondered when the discussions would move into settings conducive to give-and-take, and even eye contact, among lead negotiators. And they pondered what the anticipated weekend meeting(s) would bring, especially when, as one participant said, "The problem is if you put your foot on the accelerator, you better know where you are going, and they do not know where they are going."

Meanwhile, many commented on on-going consultations among coalitions and the role they were playing in the process. In particular, they noted the G-77/China's ongoing, parallel negotiations, in which that Group was working to hammer out a common position on the issues and other parties' amendments, while continuing to maintain solidarity in the ECOSOC chamber and delivering their comments as one through issue-specific Group spokespersons.