

UNCSD INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS: TUESDAY, 24 APRIL 2012

On Tuesday, 24 April, delegates continued informal negotiations on the draft outcome document for the UNCSD. Working Group 1 (WG1) discussed Section V (Framework for Action and Follow-up) in morning, afternoon and evening sessions. Working Group 2 (WG2) began second readings on Sections I (Preamble) and II (Renewing Political Commitment) in morning, afternoon and evening sessions. A number of side events were also convened.

WORKING GROUP 1

SECTION V: FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION AND FOLLOW-UP: A. Priority/key/thematic/cross-sectoral issues and areas: Co-Chair Kim Sook noted that after the first round of negotiations on each paragraph, previous passages from the original zero draft text and the compilation text would be deleted, except for those that delegations wished to retain.

On renewing commitments towards an integrated approach (CST 63), the EU, *inter alia*, explained its decision to work towards aspirational goals, objectives and actions in five thematic areas – water, marine environment, land and ecosystems including forests, sustainable energy, and resource efficiency including waste – noting that it would suggest changes in the text accordingly.

On recognizing progress on implementing outcomes of major summits and conferences (CST 63 bis), NORWAY, supported by ICELAND and the EU, proposed reference to gender sensitivity and equality.

Eradication of Poverty: The G-77/CHINA said it could support most of the CST on this issue with a few amendments, including a reaffirmation of the right to development. Instead of CST 63 sept on complementing national poverty and hunger eradication efforts with an enabling international environment, the G-77/CHINA supported retention of its original proposal, with a modification calling for “sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth in developing countries” as the main priority for poverty and hunger eradication, achieving the MDGs, and restoring harmony with nature.

The EU, the REPUBLIC OF KOREA and the US questioned whether text on poverty eradication should be moved to Sections I and II. The EU, the US, CANADA and NEW ZEALAND bracketed a passage about a global social protection programme.

Food Security: On the title of this subsection, the G-77/CHINA preferred “sustainable agriculture and food security.” The EU proposed adding targets on specific topics under this subsection, including land and soil management, support to smallholder farmers and increasing investments in sustainable agriculture and agri-food chains, and offered illustrative texts. After the G-77/CHINA expressed concern about discussing text on targets at this stage, questioning how it would link to the

sustainable development goals (SDGs) and emphasizing that this would *de facto* set priorities and distinctions, the EU withdrew the illustrative texts, but asked that placeholders remain for setting goals on specific topics at a later stage.

On promoting sustainable agriculture and fisheries (CST pre 64 bis), NORWAY, with MONACO and ICELAND, supported the US proposal to reference aquaculture and suggested replacing “agriculture” with “food production” to highlight the importance of fisheries. JAPAN, with the REPUBLIC OF KOREA, added language on reducing vulnerability to natural disasters. The G-77/CHINA proposed deletion of language on mitigation of climate change.

The G-77/CHINA supported deletion of CST pre 64 quint, which underlines that agriculture, food security, water and energy are important elements of a green economy.

On addressing the needs of rural communities (CST 64), the HOLY SEE recommended retaining reference to “socially responsible” practices in the agricultural sector. The EU, with the RUSSIAN FEDERATION and NEW ZEALAND, added reference to access to credit and finance.

On supporting vibrant agricultural and rural development sectors (CST 64 bis), NEW ZEALAND added language on phasing out market-distorting or environmentally-harmful production-linked subsidies.

On enhancing agricultural production, productivity and sustainability (CST 64 quat), AUSTRALIA supported the G-77/CHINA’s proposed reference to sustainable land management, and NEW ZEALAND added reference to land tenure.

On improving and diversifying crop varieties and seed systems (CST 64 sept), the US proposed text calling for investment and effective, transparent and science-based regulatory systems.

On promoting sustainable use and conservation of genetic resources for food and agriculture (CST 64 oct), the US, CANADA and NEW ZEALAND proposed deleting reference to access and benefit sharing.

On implementing the Committee on Food Security (CFS) Voluntary Guidelines on the responsible governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests (CST 64 non), JAPAN, supported by SWITZERLAND, proposed text on supporting the promotion of the Principles for Responsible Agricultural Investment. AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND and the G-77/CHINA reserved on this text. The US opposed this insertion at this time, noting the Principles are not yet agreed.

On volatility of commodity prices (CST 65), AUSTRALIA, with the US, asked to delete text on market speculation, saying it should not be singled out as a contributing factor. CANADA suggested text on science-based trade regulation to avoid trade disruptions. The G-77/CHINA asked to retain its original

proposals on price volatility (65 alt and 65 ter) and unsustainable consumption patterns in lifestyles in developed countries (65 alt bis).

Chair Kim noted no CST for information, education and extension services and use of appropriate technologies for sustainable agriculture. The G-77/CHINA asked to retain its original proposals on access to traditional seed supply systems (66 ter) and on developing countries intensifying agricultural production (66 quat).

Water: The G-77/CHINA asked to retain their proposals from the compilation text on water and sanitation as a human right (67 alt bis) and on increased support to developing country efforts to accelerate progress towards water access and management (67 bis).

On drinking water and sanitation commitments (CST pre 67), the US suggested referring to “safe” rather than “clean” drinking water.

On adopting measures to, *inter alia*, increase water efficiency, reduce pollution and promote wastewater treatment (CST 68), SWITZERLAND proposed, and the G-77/CHINA opposed, adding reference to tools, such as the water footprint or payment of ecosystem services.

On addressing water scarcity and improving water quality (CST 69), the EU, *inter alia*, added text on new commitments on reducing water pollution, increasing water efficiency and promoting the use of nonconventional water resources. TURKEY proposed text referencing floods, droughts and water infrastructure. The G-77/CHINA asked to delete this paragraph.

Energy: On access to sustainable energy services (CST pre 70), the EU, supported by the REPUBLIC OF KOREA, proposed text on considering energy efficiency at all levels of society. The G-77/CHINA, supported by BELARUS, suggested replacing “reaffirm support for” with “commit to mobilize resources.” NORWAY, with ICELAND, proposed adding reference to services “that benefit both women and men’s energy needs.”

On the Sustainable Energy for All Initiative and energy-related goals (CST 70), AUSTRALIA, with the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, supported “aspirational” goals. The G-77/CHINA proposed deleting this paragraph.

On elimination of fossil fuel subsidies (CST 70 bis), the G-77/CHINA, with the RUSSIAN FEDERATION and BELARUS, suggested deleting this paragraph. JAPAN, supported by SWITZERLAND, proposed replacing “elimination of” with “rationalization and phasing out over the medium term.” The EU proposed language calling for the rationalization and phasing out of environmentally or economically harmful subsidies, including for fossil fuels. Discussions continued in the evening on energy, as well as on, *inter alia*, harmony with nature and cities.

WORKING GROUP 2

SECTION I: PREAMBLE/STAGE SETTING: WG2 completed a second reading of the preamble. On heads of states and government resolving to work together (CST 1), delegations agreed *ad referendum* to this paragraph, which mentions, *inter alia*, high-level representatives and the full participation of civil society.

On freeing humanity from poverty, hunger and inequality (CST 2), the EU proposed modifying the text to “reduce” inequality. The G-77/CHINA said it could not accept this language.

On accelerating the achievement of internationally agreed goals (CST 2 bis), the G-77/CHINA, supported by the REPUBLIC OF KOREA, stressed the importance of referring to internationally agreed “development” goals.

On striving for a just, equitable and inclusive world (CST 2 ter), TURKEY, supported by the EU, the G-77/CHINA and JAPAN, highlighted the importance of referring to people at the center of sustainable development. This was agreed *ad referendum*.

On reaffirming commitments (CST 2 quat), the US, LIECHTENSTEIN, the EU, SWITZERLAND, the HOLY SEE and the REPUBLIC OF KOREA preferred retaining reference to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The G-77/CHINA preferred not singling it out. LIECHTENSTEIN suggested retaining language on legal obligations and guiding principles.

On freedom, peace and security (CST 2 quat bis), the CST included the G-77/CHINA’s request to mention rights to development and food, which the HOLY SEE supported. The US did not support the text. JAPAN requested reference to “human security.”

On good governance (CST 2 quint), the G-77/CHINA expressed concern that the text focused on investment, but not on other issues that are important to developing countries, such as debt, trade and finance, and suggested deleting the paragraph. The EU, supported by the US and CANADA, called for deleting a reference to fair representation of developing countries in the governance of multilateral institutions.

On strengthening international cooperation (CST 4), MEXICO proposed text on the need to transform development models that have been overdependent on the excessive use of natural resources. NORWAY stressed retaining reference to gender equality and equal opportunities for all.

RENEWING POLITICAL COMMITMENT:

A. Reaffirming Rio Principles and past action plans:

Regarding G-77/CHINA-proposed references to common but differentiated responsibilities in two paragraphs, CANADA, the US, the EU, JAPAN and others expressed concern regarding singling out one particular Rio Principle.

On reaffirming commitments from major conferences (CST 8), the G-77/CHINA stressed the importance of mentioning the Monterrey Consensus. The EU, the US and CANADA said they could not support a G-77/CHINA proposal referring to, *inter alia*, increasing financial flows for development.

On closing development gaps between developed and developing countries (CST 10 bis), the G-77/CHINA requested not singling out least developed countries. Regarding participation of all countries, in particular developing countries, in global decision making, the US requested not singling out developing countries, and did not agree to the G-77/CHINA’s proposal to reintroduce text on avoiding “backtracking” on previously undertaken commitments. Delegates continued discussing Section II in the evening.

IN THE CORRIDORS

As WG1 waded through Section V on framework for action, several delegations seemed pleased that the G-77/China showed greater willingness to also address the Co-Chairs’ suggested text (CST). And an audible sigh of relief could be heard in WG1 as paragraph after paragraph from the zero draft and compilation text was deleted, except for a few specific paragraphs that the G-77/China and some other delegations wished to retain. One issue the G-77/China expressed is very dear to them is ensuring that other approaches besides green economy are reflected. One developing country delegate said “For us, this is key to the outcome at Rio. While we don’t much care for certain parts of the CST, as long as we discuss it along with our proposals, I am ok.” “At least now we seem to be working from the same text,” another negotiator explained, although some worried that delegates might just continue reinserting their proposals into the CST.

Delegates continued corridor discussions on how discussions on IFSD, specifically on a sustainable development council and the Commission on Sustainable Development, might progress in the coming days. Apparently, country coalition groups are still formulating their positions on the issue, and are not ready for substantive discussions. One concerned delegate said it was like “staring at a blank page.” Another one clarified that “It’s not a matter of people not wanting to budge on their positions. There really are no positions yet for some.”