

UNCSD INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS: TUESDAY, 1 MAY 2012

On Tuesday, delegates continued informal negotiations on the draft outcome document for the UNCSD. Working Group 1 focused on Sections III (Green Economy) and V (Framework for Action and Follow-Up), while Working Group 2 considered Sections IV (IFSD), I (Preamble/Stage Setting) and II (Renewing Political Commitment).

WORKING GROUP 1

SECTION III: GREEN ECONOMY: On the role of international financial institutions (IFIs) and other relevant organizations with respect to a green economy (NCST 39), SWITZERLAND suggested that “environmental challenges” should be included as a consideration in this context, in addition to national circumstances and development priorities. The EU suggested “sustainable development priorities.”

On the role of business and industry (NCST 40), the US preferred to “invite” rather than “encourage” these actors, while the EU, supported by the REPUBLIC OF KOREA and MEXICO, preferred “strongly encourage.” The US, supported by JAPAN but opposed by the EU and REPUBLIC OF KOREA, also sought to remove specific reference to “goals and benchmarks of progress.” SWITZERLAND, supported by TURKEY, proposed referring to goals and benchmarks “of relative and absolute progress.” NORWAY, supported by AUSTRALIA, SWITZERLAND, TURKEY and the EU, proposed referring to the Global Compact. The G-77/CHINA said the text was becoming overly detailed, precise and potentially protectionist. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION proposed deleting the paragraph.

On appropriate actions to promote policies related to green economy (NCST 41), the EU sought language on public-private partnerships and on governments creating the necessary enabling environment. NEW ZEALAND proposed text on removing disincentives for R&D and innovation. The G-77/CHINA qualified financing from the private sector as “in support of public financing” whereas the EU suggested “complementing” public financing.

On what the transition to green economy will require (NCST 42), the G-77/CHINA suggested deleting the paragraph, while the REPUBLIC OF KOREA wished to retain it. The US, with AUSTRALIA, called for moving the portion on support to developing countries to Section V-C on MOI.

On gathering relevant environmental, social and economic data to assess policy and programme effectiveness and providing support to developing countries in this regard (NCST 43), the G-77/CHINA proposed recognizing the importance of gathering data for achieving sustainable development and poverty eradication. The EU said it could work off the G-77/China proposal, but proposed: gathering data “for the transition to a

green economy”; emphasizing support to LDCs; and retaining text on making information available to the public and policy makers. The G-77/CHINA said it is up to countries to decide how data will be used. BELARUS, opposed by CANADA, added reference to support for middle-income countries.

SECTION V: FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION AND FOLLOW-UP: Priority/key/thematic/cross-sectoral issues and areas: On Tuesday afternoon, delegates turned their attention to Section V. The EU said it would suggest indicative and illustrative goals on various thematic sections in Section V-A, underscoring that they are not intended to compete with or undermine the SDGs. The G-77/CHINA noted uncertainty regarding how the SDGs, MDGs and the targets in this subsection would link together.

On a preambular paragraph for Section V-A (NCST 63 alt), the US, with SWITZERLAND, CANADA, ISRAEL and JAPAN, sought to delete the first portion referencing the Rio Principles, Agenda 21, JPOI and other conference outcomes, noting that this was already addressed in Sections I and II. The EU, with SWITZERLAND and the REPUBLIC OF KOREA, suggested referencing the UNCSD themes of green economy and IFSD. The G-77/CHINA suggested text on achieving progress in implementing global commitments through provision of MOI.

The US, with CANADA, suggested a possible alternative paragraph on renewing commitments to an integrated approach focused on implementing agreed global commitments. The G-77/CHINA said it could not accept a paragraph that did not explicitly reaffirm and renew the Rio Principles in their entirety.

On the importance of goals, targets and indicators for measuring and accelerating progress (NCST 63 bis), the G-77/CHINA, with the US, HOLY SEE, CANADA and JAPAN, proposed deleting language on goals, targets and indicators in this paragraph, which the EU, SWITZERLAND, AUSTRALIA, REPUBLIC OF KOREA, NORWAY and ICELAND supported retaining. The G-77/CHINA added language on “achieving the eradication of poverty, hunger, attainment of the MDGs and restoring harmony with nature.” The EU queried the origin of this language, preferring relevant language from the JPOI.

On developing a global green economy roadmap (NCST 63 ter), the G-77/CHINA, supported by NEW ZEALAND, the US, CANADA, JAPAN and RUSSIAN FEDERATION, proposed deleting this paragraph, with the G-77/CHINA questioning discussion of green economy in this section, and opposing the idea of a roadmap. The EU, SWITZERLAND and REPUBLIC OF KOREA supported this paragraph, with the EU adding language on adopting a green economy roadmap and emphasizing that linkages between sections were unavoidable.

On adequate MOI, implementation of outcomes in priority areas, and platforms and information and knowledge sharing on outcomes (NCST 63), several delegations complained that the paragraph’s relation to the rest of the section was unclear.

This issue of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* © <enb@iisd.org> is written and edited by Leila Mead, Delia Paul, Keith Ripley, Nathalie Risse, Ph.D., and Chris Spence. The Digital Editor is Manu Kabahizi. The Editor is Pamela S. Chasek, Ph.D. <pam@iisd.org>. The Director of IISD Reporting Services is Langston James “Kimo” Goree VI <kimo@iisd.org>. The Sustaining Donors of the *Bulletin* are the European Commission (DG-ENV), the Government of the United States of America (through the Department of State Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs), the Government of Canada (through CIDA), the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), and the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU). General Support for the *Bulletin* during 2012 is provided by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Government of Australia, the Ministry of Environment of Sweden, the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, SWAN International, the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN), the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Japanese Ministry of Environment (through the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies - IGES), the Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (through the Global Industrial and Social Progress Research Institute – GISPRI), and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Funding for translation of the *Bulletin* into French has been provided by the Government of France, the Belgium Walloon Region, the Province of Québec, and the International Organization of the Francophone (OIF and IEPF). The opinions expressed in the *Bulletin* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of IISD or other donors. Excerpts from the *Bulletin* may be used in non-commercial publications with appropriate academic citation. For information on the *Bulletin*, including requests to provide reporting services, contact the Director of IISD Reporting Services at <kimo@iisd.org>, +1-646-536-7556 or 300 East 56th St., 11D, New York, NY 10022, United States of America. The ENB team at the Second Round of ‘Informal-Informal’ Negotiations on the zero draft of outcome document of the UNCSD can be contacted by e-mail at <leila@iisd.org>.



Introducing ENB Mobile
<http://enb.iisd.mobi/>
Mobile access to this event's
ENB reports and more!

CANADA reserved its position, the US and SWITZERLAND suggested its deletion, and the EU said it should be put “on hold” until the rest of the section was agreed. The G-77/CHINA and KAZAKHSTAN supported retaining it.

On poverty eradication as the most pressing global challenge of sustainable development (NCST 63 quint), the G-77/CHINA generally supported the Co-Chair’s text, while the US sought text stating that “poverty remains a pressing issue.” The EU reiterated its opposition to a separate section on poverty eradication, saying it would not comment on specific paragraphs on the topic without seeing them all. Discussions continued into the evening.

MAJOR GROUPS: WORKERS AND TRADE UNIONS supported a financial transaction tax and a social protection initiative, with social protection floors. FARMERS expressed concern with efforts to delete reference to nutrition from the document, and urged decent work for all fishers. NGOs lamented that green economy discussions overemphasize the role of the private sector and market-based mechanisms, and supported a strong regulatory framework for corporations.

WORKING GROUP 2

SECTION IV: IFSD: On reform and strengthening of IFIs (CST 54 bis), the G-77/CHINA highlighted representation, voting power and continuing reform. The HOLY SEE said the alternative paragraph (CST 54 bis alt) did not include the concept of transparency. The US and EU requested deleting both paragraphs.

On development of guidelines for integrating the three pillars into UN operational activities (CST pre 56 bis), SWITZERLAND, supported by CANADA, the US and MEXICO, proposed mentioning the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) of the General Assembly as the mechanism for this discussion. The G-77/CHINA opposed mentioning development of guidelines in relation to QCPR, citing concern about prejudging negotiations. The EU, G-77/CHINA and AUSTRALIA agreed to Switzerland’s proposal to mention “increased effectiveness, efficiency and coherence of the United Nations development system.”

On strengthening operational activities of the UN (CST 56), the G-77/CHINA and RUSSIAN FEDERATION opposed mentioning the UN’s “Delivering As One” initiative. NEW ZEALAND, NORWAY, the US, EU, MONTENEGRO, CANADA and AUSTRALIA supported retaining text regarding building on lessons learned from ongoing initiatives, including “Delivering As One.”

On establishing an Ombudsperson or High Commissioner for Future Generations (zero draft para 57), the EU said the role could promote an integrated and coherent approach and ensure dialogue with policy makers and civil society. The G-77/CHINA and the RUSSIAN FEDERATION asked for its deletion.

On promoting access to information, public participation and justice (CST 58), the RUSSIAN FEDERATION and US asked for deletion of “international” level. AUSTRALIA proposed “relevant level.”

On regional and sub-regional organizations (CST 60), MEXICO asked to withdraw its proposal on resource allocation.

SECTION I: PREAMBLE/STAGE SETTING: On Tuesday afternoon, Co-Chair Kim Sook presented new Co-Chairs’ suggested text (NCST) to delegates, paragraph-by-paragraph. The EU and NORWAY asked to see the complete NCST.

On poverty eradication as an overarching priority (NCST 2 alt), MEXICO, supported by the EU and the US, requested reinstating text on consumption and production patterns, and management of natural resources. SWITZERLAND, supported by KAZAKHSTAN, stressed the need to reflect the three dimensions of sustainable development and said protection of the environment was also an overarching priority. The G-77/CHINA accepted the NCST, stating that poverty impacts all three dimensions of sustainable development.

On accelerating achievement of internationally agreed goals, including MDGs (NCST 2 bis), SWITZERLAND said it could accept text on internationally agreed development goals, as long

as its proposal on “internationally agreed goals in the economic, social and environmental fields” was also included. The G-77/CHINA preferred the original NCST 2 bis.

On reaffirming commitments (NCST 2 quat), the G-77/CHINA supported inclusion of text based on “Keeping the Promise: United to Achieve the MDGs” (GA/RES/65/1). NORWAY, the EU, NEW ZEALAND, the HOLY SEE, LIECHTENSTEIN, CANADA, the REPUBLIC OF KOREA and AUSTRALIA asked to include reference to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The G-77/CHINA made a “package proposal” referring, *inter alia*, to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and reaffirming rights to development and food. The US and the EU expressed reservations on “singling out” rights to development and food. The HOLY SEE supported including the right to development.

Working Group 2 temporarily suspended its negotiations to work informally on language. Joint text was subsequently presented, retaining “the right to development and the right to food,” but with the right to food in brackets. Reference to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was moved to CST 3, and reaffirmed together with other instruments. Further text on States’ responsibilities was added from GA/RES/60/251 on the Human Rights Council. The G-77/CHINA proposed labeling this joint proposed text as a package from the floor. However, the EU, US, JAPAN and others reserved their position.

MAJOR GROUPS: BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY urged governance structures that move the world into a new spirit of collaboration, building on the best that is happening in business and industry. NGOs urged delegates to retain text on the right to participation and opposed replacing it with language on access to “legitimate information.” Arguing that voluntary codes were inadequate, she urged a strong regulatory framework with respect to corporate action and accountability. She also supported a High Commissioner for future generations. WOMEN supported text on human rights, poverty elimination and gender equality, and warned against narrowing the focus to “extreme” poverty. She also supported text on the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Some participants vented their frustrations at the slow progress Tuesday, with a few “heated” moments reported both inside and outside the conference rooms. By Tuesday afternoon, both Chairs were seeking to move things forward by proposing their own texts designed to help find common ground. Most delegates welcomed the approach, although some were grumbling that they would have preferred to see the Chairs’ proposed texts in their entirety, rather than being fed them in a “piecemeal,” paragraph-by-paragraph approach. However, by Tuesday evening most of the Chairs’ various textual suggestions had been shared with delegations.

Perhaps in recognition of the heavy workload ahead, some delegates were also discussing rumors of possible extensions to the pre-Rio negotiations—either extending the current talks by a week, or adding another session in late May or early June. Several participants also commented on “parallel” unofficial discussions on IFSD and on forestry issues, involving a number of delegations. “It’s too soon to know what these will produce, but definitely watch this space!” said one insider.

Meanwhile, Major Groups seemed pleased to have been granted a small window of time to speak to the Working Groups, with five minutes allocated at the end of each day to address delegates. “It’s not a lot, but we’ll gladly take it,” said one participant. Major Groups were also meeting behind closed doors with the EU on Tuesday evening, and have meetings lined up with others in the coming days.