

BRIEFING NOTE ON THE ELEVENTH GLOBAL MAJOR GROUPS AND STAKEHOLDERS FORUM: 21-22 FEBRUARY 2010

The eleventh Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum (GMGSF-11) was held from 21-22 February 2010 in Bali, Indonesia. Formerly known as the Global Civil Society Forum, the name of the event was changed in 2010 to make it more inclusive. The event is organized by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and takes place shortly before UNEP's Governing Council holds its annual session. An estimated 100 participants attended GMGSF-11, which aimed to provide a platform for exchange and consultation on key environmental issues to be addressed by Member States during the Governing Council and Global Ministerial Environment Forum.

In 2010, GMGSF took as its theme "environment in the multilateral system." Discussions were held on a range of issues, including international environmental governance (IEG) and sustainable development; a "World Summit on Sustainable Development (Rio+20 Summit) in 2012"; the green economy; and biodiversity and ecosystems. Participants also considered issues relating to the Simultaneous Extraordinary Meetings of the Conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions (ExCOPs), which are also taking place in Bali, from 22-24 February. There was also an "open dialogue" with Achim Steiner, Executive Director of UNEP.

OPENING OF THE MEETING

Olivier Deleuze, Director of UNEP's Liaison Office to the EU, opened the session, and gave the floor to Sascha Gabizon, Director of Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF), the newly elected Chair of the GMGSF.

In her opening address, Angela Cropper, Deputy Executive Director of UNEP, reminded participants that the meetings this week – including the GMGSF-11, the ExCOPs, and the 11th Special Session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GCSS-11/GMEF) – are the first major relevant United Nations meetings since the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in December 2009. She suggested that the week's events present an opportunity to prove that the multilateral and UN system is relevant, seminal and effective. She suggested that the ExCOPs can be viewed as a special highlight of the week and are a "first" in the history of the UN, adding that they also represent a significant step towards efficiency and effectiveness in international environmental governance. She noted that synergy among the Conventions can mainly be found in implementation at the national level, and that stakeholders have an important role at this level with regards to these Conventions. On the issue of biodiversity, she hoped for a decision at GCSS-11/GMEF on the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), and for the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to take a decision on access and benefit sharing at its Conference of the Parties in October 2010. She invited participants to consider ways to collaborate with UNEP, and provide input on all key issues on the agenda this week.

Henri Bastaman, Deputy Minister for Environmental Communication and Community Empowerment, Ministry of Environment, Indonesia, underlined the importance of the issues of oceans and benefits for indigenous peoples.

Participants then elected Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim (Association des Femmes Peules Autochtones du Tchad) as Vice Chair, and Valerio Lucchesi (International Federation of Agricultural Producers) as Rapporteur.

SESSION ONE: FIRST SIMULTANEOUS EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS OF THE CONFERENCES OF THE PARTIES TO THE BASEL, ROTTERDAM, AND STOCKHOLM CONVENTIONS

Nelson Sabogal, Chief, Convention Services and Governance Unit, Basel Convention, gave a keynote presentation on enhancing cooperation and coordination among the three Conventions. He elaborated on the synergies process to date, and the programme and substantive issues of the ExCOPs. He also reported on "Safe Planet:

The United Nations Campaign for Responsibility on Hazardous Chemicals and Wastes," which is being launched in Bali on 24 February.

Mariann Lloyd-Smith, Co-Chair of the International POPs Elimination Network (IPEN), stressed that fundamental change is needed in the way societies manage chemicals, and that contamination shows no respect for territorial borders. She suggested key challenges in the synergies process, including the need for equity in participation, the lack of an open process so far, and the threat of the lowest common denominator effect. She argued that instead of choosing the lowest common denominator in harmonization, the Conventions should aim for coherence by using the best example. She urged a focus on unsustainable consumption in developed countries and the four pillars of chemical reform, namely the right to know, precaution, substitution, and elimination.

Jim Puckett, Executive Director, Basel Action Network (BAN), stressed his support of the synergies process, but raised several issues, including the needs of developing countries (which he said carry a disproportionate burden), the threat of the lowest common denominator effect, equal funding among the three Conventions, and the need for civil society to have full access to the decision-making processes.

Allan Jones, speaking for the Canadian Chlorine Chemistry Council, the International Council of Chemical Associations (ICCA) and the World Chlorine Council (WCC), presented several suggestions for the synergies process, including looking for synergies at the local, regional and national levels, and identifying more specific proposals for collaboration.

The panel discussion focused on the threat of the lowest common denominator in the synergies process, lifecycle management, and the benefits of synergies at the national level. Regarding the synergies process, several participants stressed the need for implementation and compliance with the Conventions, the need for full stakeholder participation, and the need to improve the availability of information. Some participants noted that lifecycle management is already on the industry agenda, and that it is a responsibility along the whole value chain and of society as a whole.

SESSION TWO: ENVIRONMENT IN THE MULTILATERAL SYSTEM – PART I

Anabella Rosemberg, International Trade Union Confederation, chaired this session. John Scanlon, Principal Advisor to the Executive Director, UNEP, presented the themes and structure of the GCSS-11/GMEF. He also highlighted opportunities for Major Groups to engage, and gave a presentation on international environmental governance (IEG) and sustainable development. He announced that there will be two closed informal sessions this week, one on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and one more broadly on climate change. He also mentioned that the Rio+20 preparatory process will start in May 2010. On the issue of sustainable development, he elaborated on the ongoing debate over whether environmental sustainability should be regarded as the basis, or a "horizontal pillar," of social and economic development.

Elenita Dano, Action Group on Erosion, Technology and Concentration (ETC Group), urged a more proactive role for civil society in the debate on international environmental governance. She highlighted assessments of technologies with potentially negative environmental impacts, and ensuring compliance as important functions of IEG. She also stressed the importance of operationalizing policy coherence and synergies in a manner that does not compromise the substance and quality of the process.

Maria Ivanova, Assistant Professor of Government and Environmental Policy, College of William of Mary, proposed a civil society advisory body on IEG, and the development of a clearing house for best practices in governance at local, national, and regional levels. She stressed that civil society can add value to the IEG debate by helping build a new IEG narrative.

Participants focused, *inter alia*, on incremental and broad reforms, funding of international environmental institutions and policy, the role of civil society in the IEG process, and whether environmental issues should be viewed as the foundation of sustainable development.

SESSION THREE: DIALOGUE WITH UNEP'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner shared his views on issues on the agenda this week. Reflecting on the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen and recent criticisms of the IPCC, he said there are no alternatives to the multilateral process, and the science on climate change remains untouched. He expressed surprise at the relatively late development of a global civil society movement around the Copenhagen negotiations when compared with to other intergovernmental meetings.

On IEG, he said the goal in Bali is to "recast our paradigm of IEG." He suggested that the Rio+20 process is an opportunity to look back and assess the environmental agenda so as to choose future directions. Given the scale of international environmental policy that has already been developed, he said the international community cannot simply continue constructing policy instruments, but needs to scale up its efforts to address the issue of sustainable development. He urged clear, more focused goals, increased finance to achieve these goals, and improved compliance. He suggested that GCSS-11/GMEF should also contribute to the agenda for Rio+20. He invited civil society to engage in this debate over the next two years.

On the green economy, Achim Steiner supported economic incentives for sustainable production and consumption. He also stressed the economic value of biodiversity and ecosystems.

SESSION FOUR: ENVIRONMENT IN THE MULTILATERAL SYSTEM - PART II

In this session, which was chaired by Mildred Mkandla, EarthCare Africa, participants discussed two main topics: the green economy, and biodiversity and ecosystems.

GREEN ECONOMY: Benjamin Simmons, Economics and Trade Branch, UNEP, gave a keynote presentation on the green economy. He stressed that this is a relatively new concept, and presented UNEP's working definition of the green economy as "a system of economic activities related to the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services that result in improved human well-being over the long term, while not exposing future generations to significant environmental risks and ecological scarcities." He also presented UNEP's Green Economy Initiative, which includes activities on partnerships, research and advice. He asked participants to provide input for the GCSS-11/GMEF, the 18th Session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-18) in May 2010, and the Rio+20 Summit.

Sally Jeanrenaud, Coordinator, Green Economy Coalition, said the green economy must be a value-driven economy that is life-enhancing, and that civil society has an important role to play in developing alternative visions of development. She supported enabling the transition towards a green economy through appropriate subsidies, tax systems and trade agreement reforms. She urged that the green economy not become a niche, but rather a broad transformation of lifestyles and livelihoods. She warned that not all green jobs provide decent work, and that additional efforts are necessary for developing countries to benefit. Moreover, she noted that existing power relations and vested interests influence the transition.

Sascha Gabizon, WECF, stressed the need to rethink the economic growth paradigm, and to include social and environmental aspects in indicators for growth. She also elaborated upon the relationship between women and the green economy.

During the ensuing discussion, participants elaborated on the concept and definition of the green economy. Several noted that the green economy concept as such is not new, but that there is now a responsive global audience. Others stressed the need for systemic criticism on the current economy, and on systemic change.

BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEMS: Tim Kasten, Deputy Director, Division of Environmental Policy Implementation, UNEP, discussed the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). He suggested that solutions to biodiversity loss and ecosystems degradation include placing economic value on biodiversity and ecosystems, bridging the science-policy gap, integrating biodiversity and ecosystems into development planning, and creating win-win opportunities like "REDD+" (which stands for "reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, conservation of existing carbon stocks and enhancement of carbon stocks").

Mark Lonsdale, Scientific Committee, DIVERSITAS, discussed the role of science in managing biodiversity. He proposed that research efforts need to shift from defining the problem to helping

solve it, and that observation efforts should focus on developing a global framework. On assessment efforts, he suggested that IPBES could bridge the gap between science and policy.

Neil Franklin, Asia Pacific Resources International Holdings Ltd (a member of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development), promoted the role of business in biodiversity conservation. He highlighted the fundamental role of business to help reduce the social drivers behind biodiversity loss.

Nicholas King, Executive Secretary, Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), said GBIF is a working example of facilitating access to and exchange of biodiversity data and information.

In the ensuing discussion, participants discussed the role of civil society and communities in IPBES, the relationship between IPBES and existing initiatives, and the role of knowledge in realizing sustainable development.

SESSION FIVE: TOWARDS A WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (RIO+20 SUMMIT) IN 2012

Cecilia Iglesias, Asociación Civil Red Ambiental, chaired this session. In his keynote presentation, John Scanlon, Principal Advisor to the Executive Director, UNEP, stressed the importance of stakeholder involvement in the Rio+20 process. He stated that the Nusa Dua Declaration, which will be discussed at GCSS-11/GMEF, would feed into the Rio+20 preparatory process. He also highlighted the Global Environment Outlook 5 (GEO-5), which could also feed into the Rio+20 process.

Felix Dodds, Executive Director, Stakeholder Forum for our Common Future, reflected on the process leading to the Rio+20 Summit to date, and discussed the preparatory process for the next two years. He also presented some potential outcomes from Rio+20, including a substantive move towards a new economy, and a revised UN institutional framework for sustainable development.

During the subsequent discussion, participants considered the desired character and focus of the debates at Rio+20, the organization of the process towards the Summit, and the importance of evaluating and implementing existing agreements. Several participants underlined that civil society could use this opportunity to redefine its role in a new IEG model.

SESSION SIX: REFINING THE KEY MESSAGES TO THE GCSS-11/GMEF

Jan-Gustav Strandenaes, consultant, chaired this session, in which the Major Groups presented their messages to the GCSS-11/GMEF. The Indigenous peoples and their communities Major Group stressed the involvement of indigenous peoples and recognition of traditional knowledge in decision-making processes, and Women stressed the fact that women and children are especially vulnerable to hazardous chemicals. Farmers underlined that sustainable agriculture is at the core of a green economy. Children and Youth said young people are rising to the challenge, and are creating change themselves. Local Authorities asked for improved collaboration between global policy and local implementation in urban areas, and promoted urban green economy. NGOs stressed the importance of national implementation, and Workers and Trade Unions promoted a just transition towards a green economy. Business and Industry promoted balancing environmental, social and economic aspects in sustainable development.

KEY MESSAGES: The six UNEP regional groups, in collaboration with the Scientific and Technological Community and Indigenous peoples and their communities, reached global agreement on regional key messages. The main messages included, *inter alia*, the need to strengthen stakeholder participation at the regional level, develop clear strategies on how green jobs will be promoted, and ensure compliance of international conventions. The groups also supported the initiative for the Rio+20 Summit, underlining the importance of stakeholder participation in the process.

Participants agreed on a common message to the GCSS-11/GMEF on IEG, which proposes the creation of a civil society advisory body on IEG in the preparatory process for Rio+20.

Valerio Lucchesi, GMGSF-11 rapporteur, presented the draft common statement of the Major Groups. The participants decided to finalize this statement after the meeting.

CLOSE OF THE MEETING

During the closing session, participants arranged the publication and presentation of the messages to the GCSS-11/GMEF. GMGSF-11 Chair Sascha Gabizon thanked the participants for their contributions, and closed the meeting at 5:15 pm.