PREPCOM HIGHLIGHTS
TUESDAY EVENING, 31 MARCH 1992

RADIOACTIVE WASTES (WORKING GROUP II)

A contact group met Tuesday night to discuss paragraph 5(c) in PC/WG.IL/L.27 and Corr.1 on radioactive wastes. The paragraph in question deals with the storage and disposal of radioactive wastes in the marine environment. The text had been provisionally agreed to after extensive discussion on Saturday night. When the document was supposed to be addressed by the Plenary on Tuesday, the Vice-Chair, Joke Waller-Hunter, announced that since one delegation could not accept the text she would be holding further consultations. On Tuesday night, the US explained its last-minute objections and proposed new text to the contact group. No other delegation present supported the US on this matter. Thus, the text remained bracketed and is scheduled to be discussed today in Plenary.

EARTH CHARTER (WORKING GROUP III)

The Earth Charter contact group met last night to commence "horse-trading" in order to reach compromise on the Earth Charter text following the decision in the Bonn COP. This exercise bore no fruit. The non-G-77 countries were prepared to compromise on certain principles. For example, the EC showed increasing flexibility regarding the right to development principle. Other OECD countries expressed a willingness to consider retaining those principles regarding desertiﬁcation, biodiversity and waste. Nevertheless, the G-77 was unwilling to trade any of its preferred principles. Notwithstanding this exercise, agreement was achieved on the merging of paragraphs 10 and 15 into one principle covering both aspects of proper handling, disposal and transfer of toxic, dangerous and hazardous substances. By 1:00 am, the Co-Chairs announced that they would report back to PrepCom Chair Tommy Koh and seek his guidance for the next stage of negotiations.

INSTITUTIONS (WORKING GROUP I)

The Institutions Working Group met Tuesday evening to continue working on unresolved paragraphs in the text. Another 10-15 paragraphs were agreed upon. The group has now reached agreement on close to half of the text.

PREPCOM HIGHLIGHTS
WEDNESDAY, 1 APRIL 1992

PLENARY

The Plenary held its 66th meeting on Wednesday morning to approve two documents and hear speeches by the Minister for Environment and Forests of India and Sir Shridath Ramphal, the former Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Secretariat. The first document considered by the Plenary was PC/L.70 and Corr.1, "Integration of environment and development in decision-making". Ambassador Arnoldo Gabaldón of Venezuela, the co-chair of the contact group, introduced the document and explained that Programme Areas E and F, which were in brackets, should be deleted. Sweden and Norway had proposed Programme Area E, "Full cost environmental accounting", and the G-77 had proposed Programme Area F, "Global corporate environmental management". It was agreed that these programme areas would be withdrawn and replaced by several amendments to the other programme areas. Sweden then proposed two amendments that would replace Programme Area E. The first amendment, paragraph 46 bis, dealt with removing price distortions arising from governmental programmes affecting land, water, energy and other natural resources. The US opposed this paragraph so that it would say "seek to identify and consider measures to correct" instead of "remove" price distortions. The paragraph was accepted as amended. Sweden's second amendment, paragraph 46 ter, states that governments should encourage corporations to provide relevant environmental information through transparent reporting; and develop and implement methods and rules for accounting for sustainable development. This amendment was also accepted. The entire document was approved with several other amendments.

As PrepCom Chair Tommy Koh had to conduct a meeting on the Earth Charter at 11:30 am, he turned the chair over to Ambassador Vincente Sanchez of Chile, the co-coordinator on freshwater resources, to address the document produced on this subject, PC/WG.IL/L.29. An extensive discussion was held on the status of paragraphs 1-16, the "Introduction" and "General Objectives" sections. These paragraphs were not negotiated by the contact group due to lack of time and Sanchez requested that they remain in brackets until the PrepCom determines if these sections will remain in the final version of Agenda 21. The representative from Palestine then requested the floor to amend paragraphs 20(c) and 27 to include "people under occupation". No one objected and these amendments were accepted.

There was a lengthy discussion of the status of paragraphs 33 and 63, which set target dates for water resources assessment and water and sanitation in urban development, respectively. These paragraphs are currently in brackets pending the outcome of discussions on finance and other related Agenda 21 programme areas. Colombia suggested removing the brackets and replacing them with footnotes. India, Denmark, Tunisia, Malaysia and Guatemala wanted to retain the brackets. The final decision was to retain the brackets, while adding an explanatory footnote.

China attempted to amend a sentence in paragraph 40 by inserting the word "inappropriate". The sentence would then read, "Under these circumstances, aquatic ecosystems are also affected by inappropriate agricultural water resource development projects such as dams, river diversions, water installations and irrigation schemes." Brazil objected saying that this amendment makes all these projects seem inappropriate. Colombia attempted to reformulate the Chinese proposal by adding the phrase "when these are not appropriately conceived" to the end of the sentence. The US and France objected to any changes in the paragraph since it was carefully crafted by the contact group. The Chair agreed and said that they would have to withdraw its proposal. The document was then adopted as amended.

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER (PLENARY)

The contact group on technology transfer met yesterday afternoon. The meeting adjourned at 6:00 pm, when the delegate from Pakistan, on behalf of the G-77, said that he only had the authority to represent the G-77 until 6:00 pm. Although progress was made and several pairs of brackets were removed, delegates commented that their feeling of accomplishment was tempered by a sense of frustration. It appears as though language on protection of intellectual property rights remains in the document and is not bracketed. The document was supposed to be sent for translation last night, however, it is possible that the document sent by PrepCom Chair Tommy Koh may be extended until today. If this is the case, the contact group will continue meeting this morning.

ATMOSPHERE (WORKING GROUP I)

The Agenda 21 chapter on protection of the atmosphere (WG.IL/47) was discussed by a contact group yesterday morning. Bracketed text remains in areas related to climate change. There was reportedly a G-77 meeting yesterday afternoon to try and find a compromise position between Saudi Arabia and the other members of the G-77. Another contact group meeting was scheduled for last night.
OFFICIAL MEETINGS

SCHEDULE OF PROCEEDINGS

- 212-808-3549 (A.V. until April 30)
- 225-300-30 (until July 4)
- Washington, D.C. 20009 USA
- St.John's 300 Avenue

THE CONCERNED ADVENTIST, N.Y.

PLEASE CONTACT

TO ORDER THE FINAL ISSUE

THE EARTH SUMMIT PROCEEDINGS

IN THE CONCERNED

The government must take the initiative of action of a measure of the course of events. The conditions of life and work in the developing world, and the many aspects of human development, are of concern to all of us. The governments of the world have a responsibility to provide the means for achieving the goals set for them by the United Nations.

THE G77

The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) is the principal forum for negotiating and implementing international trade policies. GATT is also the major body in the World Trade Organization (WTO), which is charged with ensuring that trade policies and practices are open and non-discriminatory.

ENVIRONMENTAL WORKING GROUP (II)

The working group on environmental issues will meet to discuss the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

WORKING GROUP (III)

The working group on economic issues will meet to discuss the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

PROCEED WITH CARE

Things to Look for Today

- 2 April 1996

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