



Earth Negotiations Bulletin

A Reporting Service for Environment and Development Negotiations

Vol. 8 No. 17

Published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)

Monday, 14 March 1993

SUMMARY OF THE RESUMED PREPCOM FOR THE CONFERENCE ON THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES 7-11 MARCH 1994

The Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) for the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States met in a resumed session from 7-11 March 1994 at UN Headquarters in New York to complete preparations for the Conference. The Conference, which will be held in Barbados from 25 April - 6 May 1994, is one of the outputs of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED).

The Committee spent the majority of the week in informal sessions negotiating two sections of the Programme of Action for the sustainable development of small island developing States (SIDS) that remained in brackets at the conclusion of the September session of the PrepCom: the preamble and Chapter XV, "Implementation, Monitoring and Review." The other 14 chapters had been largely agreed upon in September. After a week of hard work, including night sessions, however, Chapter XV appeared to have more brackets than when the meeting started. A number of crucial issues, including institutional follow-up to the Conference, still must be resolved. Since there are no more opportunities for the PrepCom to meet, the responsibility for reaching agreement on the Programme of Action will fall to the Main Committee at the Barbados Conference.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SMALL ISLANDS STATES CONFERENCE

The Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States has its roots in Chapter 17 of Agenda 21. UN General Assembly resolution 47/189, which established the Conference, set the following objectives: review current trends in the socio-economic development of small island developing States (SIDS); examine the nature and magnitude of the specific vulnerabilities of SIDS; define a number of specific actions and policies relating to environmental and development planning to be undertaken by these States, with help from the international community; identify elements that these States need to include in medium- and long-term sustainable development plans; recommend measures for enhancing the endogenous capacity of these States; and review whether institutional arrangements at the international level enable these States to give effect to the relevant provisions of Agenda 21.

ORGANIZATIONAL SESSION

The Preparatory Committee for the Conference held its organizational session in New York on 15-16 April 1993. Penelope Wensley, Australia's Ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva and Ambassador for the Environment, was elected Chair of the PrepCom. The four Vice-Chairs are: Takao Shibata (Japan), Ioan Barac (Romania), John Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda) and José Luis Jesus (Cape Verde). Barbados, as host country, is an *ex officio* member of the Bureau. The PrepCom adopted guidelines suggesting that its consideration of SIDS should include actions at the micro level aimed at environment and development planning, measures for enhancing local skills and expertise, and medium- and long-term sustainable development planning.

REGIONAL TECHNICAL MEETINGS

As part of the preparatory process, two regional technical meetings were held. The first meeting for the Indian and Pacific Oceans was coordinated by the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and was held from 31 May - 4 June 1993 in Vanuatu. The second meeting for the Atlantic/Caribbean/Mediterranean region was held in Trinidad and Tobago from 28 June - 2 July 1993. The meeting was coordinated by the Caribbean Community (Caricom), with assistance from the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

PREPARATORY COMMITTEE SESSION

The first session of the PrepCom was held in New York from 30 August - 10 September 1993. By the conclusion of the two-week session, the PrepCom had set the process in motion for the adoption of a programme of action for the sustainable development of SIDS. The draft Programme of Action contains chapters on the following: climate change and sea level rise; natural and environmental disasters; management of wastes; coastal and marine resources; freshwater resources; land resources; energy resources; tourism resources; biodiversity resources; national institutions and administrative capacity; regional institutions and technical cooperation; transport and communication; science and technology; human resource development; and implementation, monitoring and review. While delegates were able to reach agreement on the majority of the chapters in the Programme of Action, the preamble and the chapter on implementation, monitoring and review remained entirely in brackets. As a result, delegates called for an additional session of the PrepCom to be convened so that negotiations could continue.

48TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

At its 48th session in the fall of 1993, the UN General Assembly decided that the first session of the Preparatory Committee should be resumed for a period of five working

Earth Negotiations Bulletin is written and edited by Pamela Chasek (pchasek@igc.apc.org), Charlotte de Fontaubert (61155@chopin.udel.edu), Langston James Goree VI "Kimo" (kimo@pipeline.com) and Rachel Kyte (rkyte@igc.apc.org), with funding from the International Institute for Sustainable Development (iisd@web.apc.org). Additional funding for this volume of the *Bulletin* has been provided through the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme by the Environment and Natural Resources Group (ENR) of the United Nations Development Programme and the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety. The authors can be contacted at their electronic mail addresses and by phone and fax at +1-212-888-2737. IISD can be contacted by phone at +1-204-958-7700, by fax at +1-204-958-7710 or at 161 Portage Avenue East, 6th Floor, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3B 0Y4, Canada. The opinions expressed in *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of IISD. Excerpts from the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* may be used in other publications with appropriate citation. This volume of *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* is uploaded into the APC computer conference <env.islands> and can be accessed on the Internet through the gopher at <igc.apc.org>.

days to complete the preparatory work assigned to it, including the draft Programme of Action for the sustainable development of SIDS. General Assembly Resolution 48/193, adopted on 21 December 1993, also decided to convene the first Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States in Barbados from 25 April to 6 May 1994, including a high-level segment on 5-6 May. The resolution urges that representation at the Conference be at the highest possible level and decides to convene one day of pre-Conference consultations at the venue of the Conference on 24 April 1994. The resolution also: endorses the decisions of the PrepCom regarding the participation of associate members of regional commissions and NGOs in the Conference and its preparatory process; endorses the PrepCom's decisions regarding the provisional rules of procedure and the provisional agenda for the Conference; requests the Secretary-General to ensure the timely submission of the report of donor activities requested in decision 11 of the PrepCom; requests the Secretary-General, through the Department of Public Information, to widely disseminate the goals and purposes of the Conference; and invites all Member States and organizations in a position to do so to contribute to the voluntary fund for the Conference.

REPORT OF THE PREPCOM

The resumed session of the PrepCom opened on Monday, 7 March 1994 at UN Headquarters in New York. Representatives from more than 100 countries participated in the meeting. The PrepCom also accredited an additional 21 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to the Conference, increasing the number of accredited NGOs to 89.

OPENING SESSION

The Chair of the Preparatory Committee of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Amb. Penelope Wensley (Australia), opened the resumed session of the PrepCom. She commented that in seven weeks the Secretary-General will open the Conference in Barbados and, if this Conference is to be a success, the PrepCom must finalize its work on the Programme of Action. She expressed confidence that this week will be productive mainly because of the efforts of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) during the intersessional period. She noted that AOSIS is now under the chairmanship of Trinidad and Tobago and paid tribute to Amb. Robert Van Lierop of Vanuatu, the previous Chair, and said the success of the Conference will be due to his inspiration, dedication and energy.

OPERATIONS OF THE VOLUNTARY FUND: Miles Stoby of the Secretariat indicated that seven additional contributions or pledges have been made and that the amount of the voluntary fund is now in excess of US\$500,000. Other significant contributions have also been made outside the voluntary fund. He added that it was not clear at present whether the fund would cover both transportation and per diems for developing country delegates. In any event, he said, the fund would be exhausted and that all monies would be spent. Another "trust fund" has been set up to enable participation of journalists and NGOs. So far, calls for contributions to this fund have met with positive responses on the part of Japan, the UK and Canada. Substantial sums were also provided by Australia and Canada for an officer for the Secretariat.

PREPARATIONS BY THE HOST GOVERNMENT: The Honorable Harcourt Lewis, Minister of the Environment, Housing and Lands of Barbados, informed the delegates of the status of the preparations for the Conference. A national Conference Secretariat has been set up and arrangements have already been made for accommodations, ground transportation, Conference facilities, entertainment and hospitality. Several events are planned including a National Welcoming Ceremony, receptions, cultural events and special tours. A Group of Eminent Persons has been invited

to meet in Barbados from 21-22 April 1994, to examine the concept of sustainable development with special reference to SIDS and to make recommendations to the Conference. The Governor-General of Barbados, Her Excellency Dame Nita Barrow, has agreed to be Patron and Convener of the Group. The names of the persons invited to be members will be announced when the arrangements have been finalized. The Minister also highlighted the importance of the High-Level Segment, scheduled to take place on 5-6 May. He said that this segment should be viewed as critical to the overall success of the Conference. NGOs are also expected to play a major role in the Conference.

Next, Dr. E.A. Moore, a representative of the NGO Secretariat in Barbados, updated delegates on NGO preparations. The NGO Islands Forum '94 will begin its activities on 20 April and thereafter will run concurrently with the Conference. There will be three main elements: a series of workshops that will address the main issues of the Conference and serve as a conduit to feed NGO ideas into the Conference; the Village of Hope, which includes a theme park with 28 ideas on sustainable development in SIDS; and SUSTECH '94, a showcase and marketplace for sustainable development technologies.

INFORMATION ON DONOR ACTIVITIES: Miles Stoby delivered some preliminary remarks on the Report of the Secretary-General on current donor activities in support of sustainable development in SIDS (A/CONF.167/PC/13). He noted that this was not an easy report to prepare as it was the first of its kind, and unusual within the UN system. Using new methodology and cooperating closely with multilateral institutions, donors and NGOs, the Secretariat created a database of current donor activities. Though the report did not go into qualitative analysis, its authors attempted to put it within a broader context. This is illustrated by the data tables that include socio-economic indicators and touch upon the concessionality and disbursement of overseas development assistance (ODA) to SIDS. Though the report is still a blunt instrument, it should provide a useful working tool for the Conference.

After Stoby's introduction, a member of the Secretariat elaborated on the preparation of this extensive report. The Secretariat distributed a questionnaire to UN agencies, relevant IGOs and NGOs regarding their activities in SIDS. In the case of bilateral donors, the Secretariat requested the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to submit relevant information, thus the data was not received from individual donors. He noted that 80% of the assistance comes from bilateral sources and that human resource development accounts for the highest level of support -- 24%. Donor activity is concentrated in relatively few of the sectors contained in the Draft Programme of Action and, thus, this analysis suggests there is a need for greater emphasis on other sectors.

The US noted that data on some territories is contained in this report and said that the title of PC/13 should be amended to read "Current donor activities in support of sustainable development in small island developing States and territories." Papua New Guinea supported this recommendation. Australia expressed its gratitude to the Secretariat and all those who participated in the preparation of the report. The report highlights difficulties confronting SIDS and provides lessons for the future. A facility could be set up so that additional information can be received and integrated within the report. It was agreed that an updated and revised report should be presented to the Conference.

PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

Delegates spent most of the week in informal sessions where they painstakingly negotiated the remaining bracketed text in the Programme of Action (A/48/36). For the most part, delegates based their *comments on a comprehensive* informal paper prepared by AOSIS, "Suggested Amendments

to the Draft Action Programme for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States." This document contained the AOSIS/G-77 amendments and facilitated the work of the Committee during the week. While delegates spent the most time on Chapter XV, "Implementation, Monitoring and Review," and the preamble, they also managed to review and remove some brackets in the other 14 chapters. The following is a chapter-by-chapter summary of the status of the Programme of Action and the sections that still remain in brackets.

PREAMBLE: At the beginning of the week the entire preamble was in brackets since delegates did not have sufficient time to address it during the September PrepCom session. By the conclusion of the week, the brackets around the entire preamble were removed but many of the paragraphs contained therein remain in brackets.

Two of the three paragraphs in the chapeau, which acknowledge that this Conference is the first global conference on sustainable development and the implementation of Agenda 21 and note the contents of the Programme of Action, still remain bracketed. Other sections of the preamble that remain in brackets are as follows:

- The first section of paragraph 1, which identifies human beings as the center of concerns for sustainable development;
- Paragraph 3's reference to environmental destruction caused by external interventions;
- Paragraph 5's statement that despite population density, the small population size of SIDS inhibits them from generating economies of scale;
- Paragraph 8 on per capita income of SIDS still contains various formulations in brackets as to the vulnerability of the economic performance of SIDS;
- An amendment to paragraph 9 that reaffirms women's critical contributions to sustainable development;
- The reference in paragraph 11 to the special situation and needs of the least developed countries.
- Reference to the regional technical meetings held in preparation for the PrepCom in paragraph 12; and
- Paragraph 13's references to national governments as being primarily responsible for the implementation and financing of the action programme.

I. CLIMATE CHANGE AND SEA LEVEL RISE: This chapter highlights the possible impact that climate change and sea level rise might have on SIDS. The only brackets were removed after delegates agreed on language addressing the need to strengthen commitments to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases within the context of the ongoing negotiations on the Framework Convention on Climate Change.

II. NATURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL DISASTERS: This chapter emphasizes the need for SIDS to increase their preparedness and response capacities to natural and environmental disasters. This can best be achieved through the promotion of early warning systems, strengthening broadcast capacity and telecommunications links, sharing of experience, and integrating natural disaster considerations in development planning. The only change made in this chapter was a reference to the Office of the UN Disaster Relief Coordinator. As this office no longer exists and its functions now fall under the auspices of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, the references were changed.

III. MANAGEMENT OF WASTES: The special vulnerability of SIDS to waste management problems was highlighted, particularly in view of reduced land surface in these countries. Paragraph 21 on the transboundary movement of toxic and hazardous wastes remains bracketed. The problem is the reference to the passage of ships carrying toxic and hazardous wastes and chemicals and radioactive materials through the seas of small islands.

Paragraphs (iv) and (v) in the section on International Action were amended to contain appropriate reference to

conventions and other arrangement dealing with marine pollution, in particular land-based sources. The two paragraphs were also amended to support measures to assist SIDS in improving their capacity for negotiation, follow-up and implementation of international conventions.

IV. COASTAL AND MARINE RESOURCES: This chapter aims at developing SIDS' management capacities both in the coastal area and in their exclusive economic zones (EEZs). This can best be achieved through the elaboration of an integrated coastal zone management methodology appropriate to SIDS, monitoring programmes for coastal and marine resources, developing capacities for sustainable harvesting and processing of fisheries resources and establishing clearinghouses for coastal and marine environmental information. The only paragraph that remains in brackets addresses the outcomes of the 1993 World Coast Conference and makes reference to other upcoming intergovernmental activities, in order to help SIDS develop integrated coastal management plans. Some developing country delegates, however, were uneasy about taking into account meetings that are yet to take place.

V. FRESHWATER RESOURCES: The importance of freshwater resources for SIDS and the limits they impose on sustainable development is highlighted in this chapter. The only paragraph that still contains brackets addresses the need to safeguard watershed areas. One delegate proposed an amendment dealing with over-abstraction from groundwater resources. Although developing country delegates agreed to mention safeguarding groundwater resources, the delegate proposing the amendment insisted on maintaining the concept of over-abstraction.

VI. LAND RESOURCES: This chapter does not contain any brackets and focuses on the need to elaborate land management plans in conjunction with other uses and policies. Appropriate forms of land tenure as well as attention to physical planning in both urban and rural environments are to be encouraged.

VII. ENERGY RESOURCES: In view of SIDS dependency on energy imports, energy conservation and the development of renewable sources of energy need to be encouraged. This chapter still contains three sets of brackets. The first is in the section on national action, which states that governments will promote the efficient use of energy and the development of environmentally sound energy resources and energy efficient technologies. The problem arose over the use of "appropriate economic instruments" to this end. Many developing countries felt that this language is too specific and that economic instruments are not necessarily the best approach for all SIDS.

The other two sets of brackets appear in the section on international action. Paragraph C(iii) on the transfer of energy technology was unacceptable to developed countries. Paragraph C(iv) "ensures" that international institutions and agencies incorporate efficiency and conservation into energy-sector-related training and assistance. Developed countries preferred the term "encourage," however, developing countries thought that this weakens the paragraph too much.

VIII. TOURISM RESOURCES: This chapter does not contain any brackets and focuses on tourism as both an opportunity for SIDS development and an activity that must be integrated with environmental and cultural concerns.

IX. BIODIVERSITY RESOURCES: This chapter emphasizes the importance of biodiversity, particularly marine and coastal species, to SIDS. Paragraph A(vii) which mentions the concerns of SIDS to protect the rights of those whose indigenous knowledge and know-how of biodiversity is overtaken by commercial exploitation of the resources, remains in brackets.

X. NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITY: This chapter does not contain any brackets and addresses the need to integrate environmental concerns into

national institutions and administrative arrangements, specifically in terms of economic and development planning.

XI. REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND TECHNICAL

COOPERATION: This chapter concentrates on the role that UN and non-UN regional organizations can play in assisting SIDS at the national level in instituting and implementing regional programmes, and coordinating projects and assistance. One paragraph in this chapter remains in brackets at the request of a donor country. This paragraph mentions that the programming, administrative and implementation capacities of regional organizations can be further improved with the support of member nations and other donors.

XII. TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION: The focus of this chapter is the lifeline provided to SIDS by transport and communication. Brackets remain in paragraph C(v) in the section on International Action. This paragraph states: "Promote arrangements and measures to lower the international telecommunications costs to SIDS."

XIII. SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: As well as emphasizing the important role of science and technology in building SIDS' capacity for sustainable development, this chapter examines the need to increase the use of environmentally-friendly technologies and make them available to SIDS. All brackets have been removed.

XIV. HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT: This chapter looks at mechanisms to improve the quality of life in SIDS. Paragraph 57, which addresses population issues, education and training, and health for human resource development, still contains brackets around the reference to family planning.

XV. IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW: Delegates spent most of the week negotiating this complex and crucial chapter. The "clean" text produced on 10 March 1994 was the basis for discussion on the final day as the Committee tried to clarify where there was no agreement, so that each delegation understood what remained to be negotiated in Barbados. The final review proved more arduous than the Chair foresaw as the text had omitted many of the amendments made previously. The following is a summary of the remaining bracketed text.

Paragraph 61: Reference to the international community's commitment to meeting Agenda 21 agreements on implementation remains in brackets.

Paragraph 61 bis bis: A sentence to be inserted at the beginning of this paragraph, noting that wherever Agenda 21 is referred to it should be considered in its entirety, remains in brackets.

Paragraph 63: One group made a proposal for language to be added at the end of this paragraph that would clarify the role of the public in decision making. The paragraph remains in brackets.

Paragraph 63 bis. 1. Finance: This paragraph containing two alternative proposals remains bracketed. They refer to the reordering of economic priorities in the use of resources and increased use of economic instruments.

2. Trade: The first half of this paragraph consisting of different proposals had been collapsed into one. It will be bracketed to show the differences between the two proposals on export production.

3. Technology: The language on the role of the private sector and on the rights of resources owners and intellectual property rights remain bracketed.

4. Legislation: One proposal referring to traditional and indigenous understanding as well as western concepts of law remains in brackets.

5. Institutional Development: After a heated discussion about what an intergovernmental conference can tell national governments to do, this whole paragraph was placed in brackets.

6. Information and Participation: This paragraph on increasing public awareness and information dissemination remains in brackets pending a concrete proposal from a Permanent Observer.

7. Human Resource Development: This paragraph now reads "Increase national capacity building at all levels through education, public awareness and human resource development including training and skill development, in particular of technicians, scientists and decision makers to better plan and implement sustainable development programmes."

Paragraph 64: This paragraph on regional implementation still contains a number of brackets. The first tiret of Paragraph 64B on collaboration between appropriate institutions and organizations remains in brackets. The second paragraph of the tiret now reads, "Relevant non-UN regional organizations should be encouraged to take the Programme of Action into account in the fulfillment of their respective functions." Paragraph 64C on reporting by SIDS remains bracketed as a whole.

Paragraph 64 bis: Despite attempts to resolve outstanding differences the paragraph remains in brackets with no agreement in sight on the sharing of financing responsibilities for sustainable development in SIDS.

Paragraph 66: The chapeau of this paragraph on financial resources and mechanisms remains bracketed in several places, as do tirets b, c, d, and e, on different types of financial and technical assistance, which were thought to be duplicative.

Paragraph 66 bis: This paragraph, which links financing of the Programme of Action to the Ad-Hoc Working Group of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), remains bracketed.

Paragraph 67 bis: This paragraph dealing with the origins of inputs in manufacturing for exports remains bracketed.

Paragraph 68: After some confusion, a series of brackets remains throughout the body of the text dealing with commodity prices and markets.

Paragraph 69: This paragraph suggesting a study of the impact of global trade liberalization on SIDS remains in brackets.

Paragraph 71: The references to intellectual property rights remain bracketed and will have to be made consistent with similar references in Paragraph 63.

Paragraph 75: This remains bracketed, signaling a technical rather than a substantive problem of how to mandate a UN agency to act.

Paragraph 77 bis: This paragraph, which deals with the role of the CSD in monitoring implementation of the Programme of Action, remains in brackets.

Paragraph 78: Brackets remain around the words "endeavour to" marking developed country unease with the degree of support they should provide to the transfer of environmentally sound technologies to SIDS.

Paragraph 80: Different alternatives for funding mechanisms remain bracketed.

Paragraph 81: Argentina had been charged by the Chair with resolving some of the issues in this paragraph on institutional follow-up. While progress had been made in informal consultations and a draft proposal had been circulated among delegates, no specific language was agreed upon. The Chair ruled that the results of these informals would be carried in the minds of delegates, but that the text would have to continue to reflect the original brackets. This was not disputed from the floor, but clearly frustrated many delegates. Paragraphs 81 bis and 81 ter on the role of UNCTAD and the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD) also remain bracketed.

Paragraph 83: This paragraph on better UN coordination remains bracketed.



Paragraphs 83 bis and bis bis on the roles of UNEP and UNDP in support of SIDS are bracketed.

Paragraph 85: The last sentence, referring to the development of a vulnerability index, remains bracketed.

Paragraphs 86 and 86 bis: These paragraphs, dealing with the establishment of a vulnerability index remain in brackets.

Paragraphs 88 and 88 bis: Language dealing with review and monitoring of the Conference remains bracketed.

Some delegates asked for the previous paragraph 87 on institutional follow-up to be reinstated as amended as they had no recollection of its deletion. This was overruled by the Chair and remains deleted.

BARBADOS DECLARATION

The host country circulated a paper containing elements for discussion for the Barbados Declaration (A/CONF.167/PC/L.10). The paper stresses the specific vulnerabilities of SIDS while recognizing their place in an interconnected world and as part of one global ecosystem. It highlights the stewardship by SIDS of the world's oceans and other resources, and catalogues the human resource and economic constraints SIDS face -- "Life on SIDS is thus both an alluring experience and a profound challenge." It concludes with the commitments of SIDS themselves, the international community and NGOs, and notes that the Barbados Conference is an example to the world of how to work together to coordinate action.

On Thursday night, Amb. Besley Maycock (Barbados) introduced the document and a number of delegations offered preliminary remarks. The reaction was generally positive. Some elements, such as the right to develop and people-centered sustainable development, were said to be insufficiently covered. It was agreed that the Declaration should remain accessible to all, as short as possible, and reflect wide consensus. As one delegate indicated, this should not be just another UN document. It was agreed that delegates would forward this document to their capitals and that informal consultations would resume in New York at the end of the month.

CLOSING SESSION

At the closing plenary meeting, Nitin Desai, Under-Secretary General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, addressed the Committee and congratulated the delegates on the work done so far. He stressed that this Conference is an important expression of the sense of global responsibility heralded by UNCED. SIDS are small and isolated and need international support. This Conference is a test case and must distribute practical responsibility within the international community. A lot remains to be done in Barbados, but it is possible.

The Chair then introduced draft decision documents A/CONF.167/PC/L.12, 13 and 14 on the rules of procedure of the conference, the high-level segment, and the organization and programme of work, respectively, which were all adopted. The Chair then introduced A/CONF.167/PC/L.11, a draft decision on the participation of associate members of regional commissions in the Conference and its preparatory process, which was also adopted. Next the Chair introduced A/CONF.167/PC/L.16 on the draft Programme of Action and A/CONF.167/PC/L.17 on the report of donor activities. With some clarification by the Commission of the European Union regarding its funding to SIDS, the two decisions were adopted. Decision A/CONF.167/PC/L.15 on the proposal for the Barbados Declaration was introduced and adopted. Finally, the PrepCom adopted its report (A/CONF.167/PC/L.9).

After all the reports were adopted, Gracie Fong of the Women and Fisheries Network in Fiji made a statement on behalf of all NGOs present at the PrepCom. With all delegates listening attentively she spoke in stark terms of the

realities faced by island peoples: the effects of sea level rise; pollution; radioactive contamination; lack of training or education; exploitation of resources and knowledge through commercialization of products; high unemployment; and a sense that SIDS and their people are expendable.

At the conclusion of the speech, she apologized for the erroneous statement made earlier in the week suggesting that Canada, Australia and Germany had opposed reference in Chapter III to a total ban on exports and shipments of hazardous waste, including those designated for recycling, from OECD to non-OECD countries. She clarified that those countries had opposed such a ban at the first meeting of the parties of the Basel Convention in November 1992 and then went on to name Japan, the Netherlands and the UK as the only other known countries to oppose a total ban. The NGO statement also forced Canada, Australia and Germany to clarify their positions for the record.

The Chair then brought the PrepCom to a close with a summary of the work completed and noted that there would be important work to be done between now and Barbados as well as in Barbados itself. She noted that as the first concrete follow-up to UNCED this Conference represented uncharted territory and that they had a joint responsibility to mark the path for others.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE RESUMED PREPCOM

With six weeks to go before the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, there is still no clear indication of what the practical implications of the Conference and the Programme of Action will be. Although it was intended that this resumed session of the PrepCom would hammer out issues related to implementation, monitoring and review of the 14 substantive chapters of the action programme, contained in Chapter XV, this was not to be, due to a breakdown in the negotiating process, a lack of concrete substantive recommendations, and an absence of political will.

Chapter XV of the Programme of Action mentions the need to strengthen the capacity of SIDS to participate effectively in the negotiation of new or revised agreements or instruments. This need was manifested throughout the week as AOSIS sought to coordinate its work, indicate clearly what it sought, and come forward with substantive compromise proposals. The size and competence of some of the AOSIS delegations made it difficult for small drafting groups to meet and work out such compromises, as the handful of people who had knowledge of both the subject matter and the process were needed in the informal sessions. The negotiations were also hampered by disarray within the European Union, which was unable to speak through a single voice, and CANZ (Canada, Australia and New Zealand), which while often supporting each other's amendments, did not always coordinate and, thus, strengthen their impact. The US was often unable to propose compromise text due to lack of clear instructions from Washington. To complicate matters even further, the Secretariat was unable to quickly and efficiently provide delegates with accurate, revised texts during the week. Finally, there was little substantive input from NGOs who, for the most part, have still not learned how best to influence the UN negotiating process. It was not until the conclusion of the PrepCom that NGOs submitted written comments on the entire Programme of Action. Although these comments are comprehensive, their timing may prejudice their impact.

As the week wore on, delegates seemed unable to articulate concrete, substantive recommendations. This lackadaisical attitude resulted in brackets around some of the critical issues such as financial resources and institutional follow-up with little indication on how they might be resolved. AOSIS members did work hard during the

intersessional period to produce a compilation text in response to proposals put forth by donor countries at the last PrepCom. However, there was little substantive dialogue between AOSIS and donors during the intersessional period and the resumed PrepCom that would enable them to move closer to consensus. So, whereas the purpose of this PrepCom was to remove the brackets from Chapter XV, it appeared as though this chapter will go to Barbados with more brackets than it started with.

Perhaps these other two problems could be overlooked had there been the necessary political will present in the Conference Room, but this was not the case. Agenda 21 was adopted in 1992 as a framework for the implementation of sustainable development by the year 2000 with the understanding that its implementation and the means for its implementation would evolve. However, within the SIDS negotiating process, some OECD countries have adopted an absolutist approach to Agenda 21, preventing them from finding new and innovative approaches within the political context of Rio. AOSIS seemed taken aback by this lack of political will on the part of the donors and, as a result, was drawn into macro-arguments on means of implementation rather than coming forward with its own specific and detailed proposals on what could be achieved in the present political and economic climate. Furthermore, AOSIS received and/or accepted little, if any, support from the other members of the G-77. Most non-island G-77 members who attended the PrepCom were present at formal sessions only, leaving most of the substantive work to be carried out by AOSIS alone. Those who did attend the informal sessions occasionally tried to support the islands and even propose concrete, compromise text, but were not always welcomed.

At this stage in the process the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States is similar to the UNCED negotiations after PrepCom IV -- many crucial provisions in the Programme of Action still remain in brackets with no agreement in sight. What made Agenda 21 and the Rio Declaration a reality during the Earth Summit was a combination of high-level government participation, mobilization of public pressure in the North, the efforts of the host Government, and a great deal of shuttle diplomacy by the Secretariat and its emissaries. At this point, it does not appear as though these ingredients can be put into place in time for the Barbados Conference. This places the onus on the Main Committee and the host Government to pull an endogenous, island rabbit out of a hat in Barbados.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR DURING THE INTERSESSIONAL PERIOD

PROGRAMME OF ACTION: Numerous brackets still remain in the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, especially in the preamble and Chapter XV. If the Conference is to successfully adopt this action programme, delegates will need to consult informally during the next six weeks to see if they can find acceptable language for the paragraphs on financial resources, institutional arrangements, and implementation. Look for members of AOSIS to meet among themselves and with other delegates from both the OECD countries and the rest of the G-77 to see if they can reach some provisional agreements that can be presented to the Conference in Barbados.

BARBADOS DECLARATION: The Barbados Mission will be coordinating the drafting of the Barbados Declaration during the next six weeks. Governments reacted positively to the elements paper circulated during the resumed PrepCom, however, many had hoped to see an actual draft of the Declaration. Barbados and other AOSIS members consulted with other governments in the preparation of the elements paper and are expected to continue these consultations

while drafting the actual Declaration. Nevertheless, it is expected that negotiations on this document will continue at the Conference itself.

EMINENT PERSONS MEETING: A Group of Eminent Persons has been invited to meet in Barbados from 21-22 April 1994 to examine the concept of sustainable development with special reference to SIDS and to make recommendations to the Conference. The Governor-General of Barbados, Her Excellency Dame Nita Barrow, has agreed to be Patron and Convener of the Group and the names of the persons invited to be members will be announced when the arrangements have been finalized.

THE CONFERENCE: The Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States will open on Monday, 25 April 1994 in Barbados. Pre-Conference consultations to consider organizational and procedural matters will be held at the Sherbourne Centre (the Conference site) on Sunday, 24 April at 10:00 am.

The national welcoming ceremony will take place at the Sir Garfield Sobers Sports Complex, Wildey, St. Michael, on Monday, 25 April at 9:30 am. The formal opening of the Conference will be held at 3:00 pm at the Sherbourne Centre. After that, two meetings will take place simultaneously -- the Plenary will be in session to hear statements from government delegates while the Main Committee completes negotiation of the Programme of Action and the Barbados Declaration. It is expected that Amb. Penelope Wensley (Australia) will be elected as Chair of the Main Committee.

A High-Level Segment is scheduled to take place on 5-6 May 1994, as part of the Conference. The Segment will last for one and a half days, from the morning of Thursday, 5 May, through the morning of Friday, 6 May. Thursday will be devoted to a debate on the theme, "Forging partnerships for sustainable development." The host country intends to organize a roundtable for participants in the High-Level Segment on the morning of 6 May.

NGO ACTIVITIES: The NGO Islands Forum '94 will begin its activities on 20 April and thereafter will run concurrently with the Conference. There will be three main elements:

- The NGO Forum is a series of workshops and briefings that will address the main issues of the Conference and serve as a conduit to feed NGO ideas into the Conference;
- The Village of Hope is a multi-pronged exposition of ideas, which will include a "theme park" with 28 ideas for sustainable development in SIDS; and
- SUSTECH '94 is a showcase and marketplace for environmental and affordable technologies and services that can assist SIDS to achieve more sustainable patterns of development. For more information about the NGO Forum, contact the NGO Liaison Secretariat, Letchworth Complex, The Garrison, St. Michael, Barbados; Fax (809) 435-0994; Phone (809) 435-2995/2996. For more information about SUSTECH '94, contact the Barbados Manufacturing Association, Building #1, Pelican Ind. Pk, Barbados; Fax: (809) 436-5182; Phone: (809) 426-4474.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For information about the Conference and related media activities, contact:

Lelei LeLaulu, Outreach Coordinator
Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States
Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development
Room S-2977-E, United Nations
New York, NY 10017 USA
Phone: (212) 963-7074; Fax: (212) 963-5935.