



# Earth Negotiations Bulletin

*A Reporting Service for Environment and Development Negotiations*

Vol. 8 No. 20

Published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)

Wednesday, 27 April 1994

## CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS TUESDAY, 26 APRIL 1994

### PLENARY

#### SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

**GENERAL:** Rafeuddin Ahmed emphasized the need for appropriate population policies that allow for the diversification of skills within the economy, without leading to unemployment. Emigration is a drain of social capital invested in training and skill diversification.

**ALGERIA:** On behalf of the Group of 77, Amb. Ramtane Lamamra noted that along with other constraints, SIDS are heavily dependent on international trade. He stressed that while the draft Programme of Action is a recipe for success, resolution of Chapter XV is an essential element and must be a priority for all countries.

**GREECE:** Speaking on behalf of the European Union, Yannis Souliotis said the mid-term review of Lomé IV will pay attention to SIDS, while priority will continue to be given to the least developed SIDS. He stressed the benefits of regional integration.

**CHINA:** The representative stressed that while the international community had done much to implement Agenda 21, the agreements on financial resources and technology transfer are incomplete. The Programme of Action should be based on a balance between economic development and environmental protection.

**MALAYSIA:** The representative stated that Chapter XV is the most important and he called on developed countries to honor their Rio commitments. He stressed the need for South-South cooperation and urged the Conference to protect the rights of owners of biodiversity and to allow benefits to accrue to them.

**UNDP:** Administrator James Gustave Speth stressed sustainable human development, which is pro-poor, pro-women, pro-jobs and pro-environment. He urged governments to support the 20/20 initiative for a commitment of 20% of national budgets to meet primary needs in return for donor countries' allocation of 20% of ODA for these purposes.

**BAHAMAS:** Deputy Prime Minister Orville Turnquest stressed that disaster preparedness is essential. Tourism and value added financial services offer many SIDS the prospect of economic success. He stressed the burden created by the drug trade.

**WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION:** Secretary-General Obassi presented a case study on natural disasters and sustainable development of small island developing states (A/CONF.167/CRP/4).

**JAPAN:** The representative called attention to the essential elements of the Programme of Action on human

resource development and institutional and administrative capacity and called for coordinated national, regional and international action.

**UNEP:** Elizabeth Dowdeswell, UN Under-Secretary-General for UNEP and Habitat, said that even if recommendations of this Conference are modest in scope they must demonstrate a capacity to translate words into action. Efficient management of environmental and human resources is necessary.

**GRENADA:** Phinsley St. Louis, the Minister of Health and Environment, said that low commodity prices have brought instability to the island. Because of limited land size, agriculture diversification is not an option. The international community must help SIDS in their economic restructuring.

**CARICOM:** Edwin Carrington, Secretary-General of the Caribbean Community, stressed the need for timely implementation of the results of this Conference at the national, regional and international levels. International assistance should not be seen as aid, but rather as a contribution to sustainable development.

**ICELAND:** Thórir Ibsen, on behalf of the Nordic Group, said that the Programme of Action should meet specific objectives and focus on practical actions at national, regional and international levels. The Barbados Declaration should be easy to understand, accessible and concise.

**MARSHALL ISLANDS:** Tom D. Kijiner, Minister for Health and Environment, supported establishment of a permanent mechanism to monitor sustainable development in SIDS and facilitate communication and information exchange.

**VENEZUELA:** Amb. Amry Touron Lugo said that Agenda 21 is the greatest programme of action adopted by the UN, but it does not have the necessary support to make it a reality. To implement this programme of action for SIDS, new funds and the transfer of environmentally sound technology are important.

**TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO:** Minister of Consumer Affairs Camille Robinson-Regis called for new and additional financial resources and added that existing levels of funding would be better utilized if fewer projects are funded more effectively, the funding process is more transparent, and programmes of donor agencies avoid duplication.

**REPUBLIC OF KOREA:** Don Wook Kim said it is not possible for SIDS to achieve sustainable development without external assistance and cooperation. He supported the need for new and innovative funding. The CSD should monitor the implementation of the Programme of Action.

**PHILIPPINES:** Amb. Jose Guerrero said this Conference should achieve greater respect for the strengths of the islands and international support to develop the national capacities of the islands. The right to development, adequate financing, and technology transfer are all linked to the most important resource -- human beings.

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**MAURITANIA:** Amb. Mohamedou Ould Mohamed said the international economic system is the source of numerous problems, including terms of trade and debt. The fate of youth also lies in the balance. There needs to be an urgent response to poverty, including partnership mechanisms.

**UNIFEM:** Marjorie Thorpe, Acting Director, said that there is a need to strengthen human capacity. SIDS must reach out as partners, not as paupers, to create a true partnership between North and South. Women must be fully engaged in the process. What is at stake is equity, human dignity, self reliance and sustainable human development.

**INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION:** Demetrio Alvero described a partnership initiative launched by the Government of Jamaica, the EU and the IOM aimed at facilitating the return of qualified Jamaican nationals residing in industrialized countries to fill priority positions of development in Jamaica.

**REGIONAL UNION OF GUADELOUPE ASSOCIATIONS FOR HERITAGE AND ENVIRONMENT:** Fred Lee stressed the importance of waste management in the Caribbean and urged recycling and rational and effective waste management.

**WORLD WIDE FUND FOR NATURE:** Joy Hyvarinen hoped that this Conference can bring about some real progress towards ecologically-sound and socially-just development. Unless cross-sectoral issues (finance, trade, technology transfer and institutions) are resolved, agreement on sectoral issues will matter little in the long run.

#### MAIN COMMITTEE

The Main Committee met briefly Tuesday morning to discuss a number of procedural matters, including the election of officers and the programme of work. The Chair, Amb. Penelope Wensley (Australia), said it is the job of the Main Committee to finish what the PrepCom began. While there is agreement on six of the 15 chapters, there are still a number of square brackets in the preamble and eight chapters, including Chapter XV, which contains the vital issues of finance, technology transfer and institutional follow-up to the Conference.

The Committee then elected the following Vice-Chairs: Takao Shibata (Japan); Ioan Barac (Romania); and John Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda). Later, the African Group nominated Amb. Marc Marengo (Seychelles). Shibata was also nominated to serve as rapporteur. Wensley then announced that the Chair of AOSIS had asked her to conclude the work of the Main Committee by 1:00 pm on Wednesday, 4 May, to allow time for an AOSIS Summit to precede the High-Level Segment. After consultations, it was agreed that the Main Committee would begin its work by considering Chapter XV of A/CONF.167/L.1, which will be the basis of the Committee's work. She urged delegates with new proposals to share these texts as widely as possible.

Greece, on behalf of the EU, suggested that the text of the preamble be condensed. On finance, the EU wants to see better use of existing plans and resources, and use of innovative financing mechanisms. On institutional development, there is a need to strengthen national institutional capacities and improve coordination at the sub-regional level. Trinidad and Tobago, on behalf of the G-77, China and AOSIS, insisted that the draft Programme of Action should be looked at in its entirety. The Committee should not only concentrate on removing brackets and rubber-stamping the rest. She requested that the meeting adjourn so that the G-77 and AOSIS, could prepare themselves for the discussion on Chapter XV.

#### INFORMAL SESSION OF THE MAIN COMMITTEE

In the afternoon, Wensley announced that after further consultations it was suggested that the Committee focus initially on Section D of Chapter XV, Implementation, Monitoring and Review, using a non-paper prepared by AOSIS/G-77 as the basis for discussion. The Chair of AOSIS introduced the non-paper, stressing that it is based on the informal negotiations held during the resumed session of the PrepCom. The Committee began its first reading with the

first sub-section on intergovernmental follow-up. The authors suggested mechanisms for review in the context of the CSD, the Second Committee of the General Assembly and the GA itself. The Chair suggested that with some consultations, agreement could be reached on all points. On the issue of reporting, one delegation asked for greater specificity on what reports are expected when and for what purpose. Another asked that sub-regional as well as regional bodies be included in such reports. Under the sub-section on interagency coordination, it was clarified that Agenda 21 is the basis for action and not a framework, which may imply legal onus. The discussions on the secretariat support structure led to differences between those resisting the creation of new secretariat posts to carry out the follow-up functions, and those advocating them. These differences will be resolved in informal informals, facilitated by Vice-Chair Ioan Barac. While the General Assembly will consider the recommendations together with a statement of the programme budget implications, it was stressed that the recommendations of the Conference could not be too open-ended. It was noted that in preparing appropriate reports, non-UN bodies should be included.

In the sub-section on organs, programmes and organizations, the mutual roles of UNDP and UNEP were clarified and it was agreed to cite their references in Agenda 21. There was considerable discussion on the reference to UNCTAD. Some were concerned that this Programme of Action should only refer to UNCTAD's work regarding SIDS and not its entire mandate. It was agreed that Sweden should coordinate informal consultations on this issue. Under the sub-section on regional and sub-regional cooperation and implementation, one delegation asked for stronger reference to local participation in decision making, and to references to the public and private sectors. Further consultation will take place on these points. One delegation, breaking ranks with his group, asked that indigenous people be referred to separately.

#### IN THE CORRIDORS I

NGOs have been fuming around the Sherbourne Center as they bounce from room to room, ejected by the Secretariat's priority to house government group meetings. To rub salt into the wound, the NGO lounge has no computers or office facilities. Asked to mix business and pleasure at the opening ceremony, NGOs wonder what business the Conference organizers really want from them.

#### IN THE CORRIDORS II

Representatives of the UN International Drug Control Programme and some NGOs have been lobbying delegates in the corridors on the importance of drug abuse control. Drugs are only mentioned once in the draft Programme of Action and only the Bahamas has even mentioned the effects of the drug trade and drug abuse during the General Debate.

### THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

**PLENARY:** The Plenary will continue the general debate today in Conference Room 1 with a full complement of speakers. Look in today's journal for the speakers' list, however, if yesterday was any indication, there will be many changes during the course of the day.

**MAIN COMMITTEE:** The Main Committee will continue consideration of the AOSIS/G-77 non-paper on a new Section D of Chapter XV, beginning with paragraph 16. Look for a number of informal-informal consultations in the corridors and small conference rooms on some of the critical issues in this non-paper.

**BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE FORUM:** The Foundation for International Environmental Law and Development (FIELD) and the Interim Secretariat for the Convention on Biological Diversity will host a workshop on "Obtaining Benefits from Marine and Genetic Resources Opportunities for SIDS under the Convention on Biological Diversity," at 1:00 pm in Conference Room 3.