



## SUMMARY OF THE 23RD SESSION OF THE UNEP GOVERNING COUNCIL/GLOBAL MINISTERIAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM: 21-25 FEBRUARY 2005

The 23rd session of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC-23/GMEF) took place from 21-25 February 2005, at the United Nations Office at Nairobi, Kenya. Over 1000 participants, including delegates from 136 countries, as well as representatives of UN agencies, international organizations, academia, non-governmental organizations, business and industry, and youth organizations, attended the week-long gathering. Fifty-four of the 58 member States of the Governing Council were represented.

During the week, delegates convened in plenary sessions, a Committee of the Whole (COW), a drafting group and two open-ended contact groups to consider draft decisions. From Monday to Wednesday, ministerial consultations considered the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, including those in the Millennium Declaration, with a focus on environment and poverty, environmental sustainability, and gender and the environment. The Governing Council/GMEF concluded its work by adopting more than 11 decisions on issues relating to small island developing States, chemicals management, UNEP's water policy and strategy, international environmental governance, gender equality and the environment, keeping the world environment situation under review, Programme of Work and Budget, administrative and other budgetary matters, poverty and the environment, environmental and equity considerations in the procurement practices of UNEP, and strengthening environmental emergency response and developing disaster prevention, preparedness, mitigation and early warning systems in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster.

As delegates left the UN complex in Gigiri on Friday evening, they collectively breathed a sigh of relief. Not only had they survived a complex, often chaotic, week-long meeting, with a lengthy agenda, a staggering number of events, and an immense volume of documentation, but they also managed to accomplish most of the objectives of GC-23/GMEF. In a meeting devoid of grandstanding and politicking, eased along by seasoned chairpersons and facilitators, delegates succeeded in approving a comprehensive work programme and a hefty spending programme, which rivaled the record set in Mostafa Tolba's time.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UNEP GC/GMEF

In response to the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment, the UN General Assembly, in resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 1972 officially established UNEP as the central node for global environmental cooperation and treaty making. The resolution also established the UNEP Governing Council (GC) to provide a forum for the international community to address major and emerging environmental policy issues. The GC's responsibilities include the promotion of international environmental cooperation and the recommendation of policies to achieve this, and the provision of policy guidance for the direction and coordination of environmental programmes in the UN system. In 1992, the UN Conference on Environment and Development reaffirmed UNEP's mandate as the principal environment body within the UN system and supported an enhanced and strengthened role for UNEP and its GC.

The Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GMEF) is constituted by the UNEP Governing Council as envisaged in UN General Assembly resolution 53/242. The purpose of the GMEF is to institute a process for ensuring policy coherence in the environment field, as proposed in the 1998 report of the UN Secretary-General on environment and human settlements.

**19TH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL:** In 1997, the Governing Council met for its 19th session (GC-19), the first part of which took place from 27 January to 7 February, and

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the second part from 3-4 April at UNEP headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. At GC-19, delegates adopted the Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of UNEP, which expanded the mandate to include: analyzing the state of the global environment; assessing global and regional environmental trends; providing policy advice and early warning information on environmental threats; and catalyzing and promoting international cooperation and action, based on the best scientific and technical capabilities available. The Nairobi Declaration was formally endorsed in June 1997 at the 19th Special Session of the UN General Assembly.

**20TH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL:** The 20th session of the Governing Council took place from 1-5 February 1999, in Nairobi, and marked the first meeting of the Council since the appointment of Klaus Töpfer as UNEP's fourth Executive Director. The Council adopted over 30 decisions on a range of topics, including: the Environment Fund, administrative and budgetary matters; linkages among and support to environmental and environment-related conventions; and policy issues, including the state of the environment, coordination and cooperation within and outside the UN, UNEP governance and emerging policy issues.

**SIXTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL/GMEF:** The sixth Special Session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GCSS-6/GMEF) took place from 29-31 May 2000, in Malmö, Sweden. Ministers adopted the Malmö Ministerial Declaration, which agreed that the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development should review the requirements for a greatly strengthened institutional structure for international environmental governance (IEG).

**21ST SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL/GMEF:** The 21st session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC-21/GMEF) took place from 5-9 February 2001, in Nairobi. A high-level ministerial dialogue discussed implementation of the Nairobi Declaration and the Malmö Ministerial Declaration. GC-21/GMEF also established the Open-ended Intergovernmental Group of Ministers or Their Representatives (IGM) to undertake a comprehensive policy-oriented assessment of existing institutional weaknesses as well as future needs and options for strengthening IEG. The IGM met five times, and reported on its work to GCSS-7/GMEF.

**SEVENTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL/GMEF:** The seventh Special Session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GCSS-7/GMEF) was held from 13-15 February 2002, in Cartagena, Colombia. Delegates adopted the IGM report on IEG, which notes that the international environmental governance process had highlighted the need for a high-level environment policy forum as one of the cornerstones of an effective system of international environmental governance, and noted that the GC/GMEF should be utilized more effectively in promoting international cooperation in the field of the environment, providing broad policy advice and guidance, and identifying global environmental priorities.

The IGM report also recommended that in order to play its role as the high-level environmental policy forum in the UN system, the GC/GMEF should: keep under review the world environment situation and develop policy responses in order to ensure that emerging environmental problems of wide international significance receive appropriate and adequate consideration based on sound science; provide general policy guidance for the direction and coordination of environmental programmes and make cross-cutting recommendations; promote international cooperation in the field of the environment and recommend policies to this end; and strengthen the

coordination and institutional requirements for international environmental policy. The report also highlighted the need to ensure the universal participation of member States of the UN and its specialized agencies in the work of the GC/GMEF, and to strengthen UNEP's financial situation.

In addition to the IGM report, delegates adopted decisions relating to: a strategic approach to chemicals management at the global level; compliance with and enforcement of multilateral environmental agreements; the development of a strategy for the active engagement of civil society, the private sector and Major Groups in the work of UNEP; the implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities; and the environmental situation in the occupied Palestinian territories.

**22ND SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL/GMEF:** The 22nd session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC-22/GMEF) took place from 3-7 February 2003, in Nairobi. GC-22/GMEF adopted more than 40 decisions on issues relating to IEG, post-conflict environmental assessment, UNEP's water policy and strategy, a strategic approach to international chemicals management, a mercury programme, support to Africa, production and consumption patterns, and the environment and cultural diversity. Delegates also adopted UNEP's Programme of Work and Budget for the biennium 2004-2005.

**EIGHTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL/GMEF:** The eighth Special Session of UNEP's Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GCSS-8/GMEF) took place from 29-31 March 2004, in Jeju, Republic of Korea. At the conclusion of the ministerial consultations, delegates adopted the "Jeju Initiative," containing the Chair's summary of the discussions. GCSS-8/GMEF also adopted four decisions on: small island developing States; waste management; regional annexes; and the implementation of decision GCSS.VII/1 on IEG.

## REPORT OF THE MEETING

UNEP Executive Director Klaus Töpfer opened the 23rd session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum on Monday, 21 February 2005, with a minute of silence for the victims of the recent Asian Tsunami.

Outgoing Governing Council President Arcadio Ntagazwa (Tanzania) said the adoption of the Bali Strategic Plan was a crucial achievement that will change the way UNEP conducts its business. He said the Plan's success will depend on how it is financed, and suggested that the Plan's broad scope allows for contributions from the Environment Fund or from trust funds and counterpart contributions.

UNEP Deputy Executive Director Shafqat Kakakhel delivered a message on behalf of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. He called on national governments to work with the private sector and civil society to sustain the momentum for sustainable development, and to protect natural resources that are fundamental in combating poverty.

Anna Tibaijuka, Executive Director of UN-HABITAT, stressed the need for cooperation among various international organizations and a concrete policy commitment by governments in meeting poverty and environment challenges, especially the provision of safe drinking water and housing to people living in slums.



Zeng Peiyan, Vice-Premier of China, outlined China's commitment to environmental protection. He called for international cooperation in new areas for implementing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), such as building environmental infrastructure, reducing natural disasters, opening markets and removing trade barriers.

Mwai Kibaki, President of Kenya, emphasized the opportunity to utilize UNEP's work programme to eradicate extreme poverty and ensure sustainability. He further urged the strengthening of UNEP's financial base, increasing States' contributions to the Environment Fund, and consolidating UNEP's scientific base.

Delegates then elected Rachmat Witoelar, Indonesia's Minister of Environment, as President of the Governing Council. They also elected Laurent Sedogo (Burkina Faso), Sulfina Barbu (Romania), and Beat Nobs (Switzerland) as Vice-Presidents, and Donald Cooper (Bahamas) as Rapporteur. Delegates adopted the provisional agenda and organization of work for the session (UNEP/GC/23/1 and Add.1). The credentials of delegations were presented and approved on Friday, 25 February, during the closing plenary.

**THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S POLICY STATEMENT:** Recalling that 2005 is the 60th anniversary of the UN, Töpfer stated that this is a year of responsibility and accountability. He emphasized that the GC-23/GMEF had the opportunity and the responsibility to substantially contribute to the work of the Beijing +10 review, the Commission for Sustainable Development, and the General Assembly High-Level Plenary Meeting on the review of the Millennium Declaration. He urged delegates to focus on, *inter alia*: an ecosystem approach to Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), technology transfer, capacity building, sustainable consumption and production patterns, chemicals, including mercury, the Bali Strategic Plan, strengthening UNEP's scientific base, and early warning systems. He also stressed that in their work, delegates should take into account the work of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector.

### MINISTERIAL CONSULTATIONS

Ministerial consultations, which took place from Monday to Wednesday, considered the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, including those in the Millennium Declaration. The three sessions of the ministerial consultations focused on poverty and the environment, environmental sustainability, and gender and the environment. On Wednesday, 23 February, the UK's Minister for Environment and Agri-Environment, Elliot Morley, introduced the draft President's Summary. During the discussion, delegates proposed various amendments to the Summary. On Friday, 25 February, GC Vice-President Sedogo introduced the revised President's Summary, which was adopted with minor amendments. Sedogo said the Summary would be submitted to CSD-13 and the high level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration.

The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin's* coverage of the ministerial consultations is available online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/vol16/enb1643e.html> and <http://www.iisd.ca/vol16/enb1644e.html>.

**President's Summary:** The President's Summary (UNEP/GC.23/L.3/Rev.1) is divided into four parts, an introduction and three substantive sections on: environment and poverty (MDG Goal 1); environmental sustainability in relation to water, sanitation and human settlements (MDG Goal 7); and gender and environment (MDG Goal 3). Each section contains an overview of the issues involved in the goal, and recommendations for countries, the international community and UNEP.

**Environment and poverty:** The President's Summary contains recommendations for countries and the international community to implement MDG Goal 1, including:

- providing economic rationale for investments in environmental sustainability;
- financing and implementing the Bali Strategic Plan;
- canceling or alleviating debt for Least Developed Countries and Highly Indebted Poor Countries;
- employing innovative financial mechanisms;
- increasing efforts to meet 0.7% of gross domestic product (GDP) for official development assistance (ODA);
- expediting the implementation of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) and other related development goals, including those contained in the Mauritius Strategy;
- removing trade and aid measures in a mutually supportive manner; and
- strengthening the scientific and financial base of UNEP.

Regarding UNEP, the Summary recommends, *inter alia*: implementing the UNEP and UNDP Memorandum of Understanding; and enhancing cooperation with international financial institutions and specialized agencies and programmes within the UN.

**Environmental sustainability:** The President's Summary contains recommendations for countries and the international community to implement MDG Goal 7, including:

- achieving environmentally sustainable water use and applying IWRM, including ecosystems approaches;
  - quantifying costs of environmentally unsustainable water use;
  - employing smaller scale and environmentally sustainable infrastructure;
  - promoting land-use planning policies to reduce vulnerability of slum-dwellers;
  - increasing financial resources; and
  - improving water institutional mechanisms and governance.
- Regarding UNEP, the Summary recommends, *inter alia*:
- increasing support for the implementation of the JPOI target of integrated water resources management and efficiency plans by 2005;
  - monitoring the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and marine and freshwater biodiversity targets of the JPOI by the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC), as mandated by CBD;
  - providing support for establishing regional water ministerial bodies;
  - ensuring, together with UNDP and the UN Development Group, that environmentally sustainable water use is integrated into poverty reduction strategies and national development plans; and
  - increasing its presence in international fora to underline environmental sustainability in meeting, *inter alia*, water targets.

**Gender and environment:** The President's Summary contains recommendations for countries and the international community to implement MDG Goal 3, including:

- mainstreaming gender equality at all levels in strategies, policies and programmes;
- empowering women and girls through education and capacity building;
- including gender equality and environment in school curricula for both men and women;
- removing barriers for women and girls to access leadership roles, economic activities and land tenure;
- focusing on international commitments that particularly affect



women such as chemicals, heavy metals, water, sanitation and human settlements; and

- strengthening or establishing mechanisms to assess the impact of development and environmental policies on women.

Regarding UNEP, the Summary recommends, *inter alia*:

increasing its role in areas of education, participation and assessment, in collaboration with UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDAW, other UN agencies and national governments.

## PLENARY

**ACTIVITIES OF UNEP RELATED TO THE TSUNAMI DISASTER:** This issue was discussed in the plenary on Wednesday, 23 February. Klaus Töpfer highlighted UNEP's activities in response to the disaster, including UNEP's environmental impact assessments in seven countries (UNEP/GC.23/INF/29). Pasi Rinne, UNEP, introduced the activities of UNEP's Tsunami Task Force, and emphasized the importance of developing a system for early-warning and environmental assessment. Surendra Shrestha, UNEP's Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, presented the findings of UNEP's report "After the Tsunami – Rapid Environmental Assessment," highlighting: damage to coastal ecosystems; water and soil contamination; hazardous wastes; infrastructure damage; impact on livelihoods; and indigenous knowledge.

Representatives from the disaster-affected countries, including Sri Lanka, Maldives, Thailand, India and Indonesia, made presentations on the damage and loss to property and human lives. Praising UNEP for its immediate action and support, they appealed for the establishment of an early warning system and the mobilization of international efforts for rehabilitation. In the discussion that followed, many delegations expressed their sympathy and committed their support to the affected countries. Töpfer pledged to cooperate closely with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and other UN agencies in establishing an early warning system and emergency prevention, preparedness and response.

**THE BALI STRATEGIC PLAN:** On Thursday, 24 February, the plenary considered the Bali Strategic Plan (UNEP/GC.23/6/Add.1). Adnan Amin, UNEP, presented the background and the process leading to the development of the Bali Strategic Plan. Many delegates indicated their support for the Plan and emphasized the importance of its implementation. The discussions focused mainly on implementation mechanisms and funding, which were stressed by Indonesia, Mauritius, Kenya, Tuvalu, and Antigua and Barbuda. Several delegates also requested amendments to the Plan. Mauritius underscored the importance of strengthening UNEP's regional offices and Tuvalu recommended that UNEP establish a subregional office in the Pacific to facilitate SIDS' implementation of environmental activities and access to financial assistance. Mauritius underscored the importance of country-driven implementation activities.

**CHEMICALS:** On Thursday, 24 February, the plenary considered issues of chemicals, focusing on the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM). SAICM Preparatory Committee President Viveka Bohn presented an overview of the SAICM process. Discussions focused on regional issues, financial mechanisms, funding, collaboration and partnerships, and the dumping of chemicals in developing countries. Indonesia and Senegal highlighted, *inter alia*, the importance of a regional focus in the SAICM process. The EU specified that they would actively work for the adoption of the SAICM in 2006.

**INPUT TO THE THIRTEENTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:** This issue was discussed in plenary on Thursday, 24 February. John Ashe, Chair of CSD-13, expressed satisfaction with the outcome and recommendations made during the ministerial consultations. He highlighted the importance of: addressing poverty and human development; mobilizing financial resources, both public and private; involving local-level stakeholders; accelerating IWRM; and enhancing the role of women. Verle Vandeweerd, UNEP, said that the ecosystem approach, IWRM and poverty reduction are three important elements in water management. Halifa Drammeh, UNEP, emphasized the need to improve interagency cooperation. The Gambia, Bangladesh and Sudan stressed the importance of IWRM, sanitation and the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan. The US outlined its expectations for CSD-13, noting the need to, *inter alia*, develop revolving funds, prepare water safety and watershed management plans, and implement IWRM.

## COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

On Monday, 21 February, COW Chair Beat Nobs (Switzerland) opened the session and presented the organization of work, which was approved by the Committee. A drafting group under the chairmanship of Paul Zom Lolo (Nigeria) met throughout the week to consider draft decisions on UNEP's revised water policy and strategy and on international environmental governance. Contact groups on the programme and budget, chaired by Frédéric Renard (Belgium), and on chemicals management, chaired by Viveka Bohn (Sweden), also met throughout the week.

Cuba, on behalf of the G-77/China, and the EU made general statements on the following issues: global cooperation in addressing poverty, in particular for the provision of financial resources and technology transfer; effective and immediate implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan; strengthening environmental emergency responses and the development of early warning systems; chemicals management; IEG; and implementation of IWRM. Guy Canivet, President of France's Court of Appeals, presented the outcome of the roundtable dialogue on advancing the MDGs through the rule of law, held in Nairobi on 16-17 February 2005 (UNEP/GC.23/CRP.2). Kakakhel introduced a document containing the ten draft decisions prepared by the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR), noting that they would be dealt with by the drafting group and contact groups (UNEP/GC.23/L.1).

On Wednesday, 23 February, the COW addressed Cooperation and coordination within the UN system on environmental matters and heard statements from the secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin's* coverage of these discussions is available online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/vol16/enb1645e.html>

## GC-23/GMEF DECISIONS

**Small island developing States (SIDS):** The draft decision was considered in the COW on Tuesday, 22 February. The COW agreed to forward the decision to the plenary for adoption. The plenary adopted the decision on Friday, 25 February.

**Final Decision:** In the decision (UNEP/GC.23/CW/L.2), the GC/GMEF notes with satisfaction the outcomes of the Mauritius International Meeting, and requests the Executive Director to ensure that UNEP's activities in relation to SIDS contribute to the implementation of the outcomes of the Mauritius International Meeting. The GC/GMEF also decides to request the Executive Director to continue strengthening the activities of UNEP related to SIDS on a tailored and regional basis.



**Chemicals management:** This issue was introduced in the COW on Monday, 21 February, when the Secretariat presented an omnibus decision submitted by the CPR with operative sections on: cooperation between UNEP, relevant MEAs and other organizations; the SAICM; lead in gasoline; and mercury. The draft decision was addressed in the COW on Tuesday, and in a contact group chaired by Viveka Bohn, which met the rest of the week. On Friday morning, 25 February, the COW agreed to forward the draft decision to the plenary for adoption. The plenary adopted the decision, without amendment.

In the COW, the discussion focused primarily on the mercury section of the draft decision on chemicals management. The US, Australia and Japan expressed reservations to a legally-binding instrument on mercury and, with Canada, called for a partnership approach to achieve further results. Canada said the possibility of negotiating a legally-binding instrument should not be precluded. The Russian Federation and the G-77/China said the first priority should be to finalize the SAICM, while Norway and Switzerland said further action by UNEP would contribute to the SAICM and, supported by Iceland, emphasized a legally-binding instrument on mercury and other heavy metals as the best long-term solution. The EU also expressed support for a legally-binding instrument.

In the contact group, delegates deliberated on the draft decision and considered new proposals on mercury presented by: the US; Norway, Switzerland and the EU; and Canada. While the partnership approach received general support, the EU said it must remain a complementary strategy and, with Switzerland and Norway, called for a legally-binding instrument on mercury. Noting that for many countries the partnerships resulting from the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) have not delivered positive results, developing countries expressed support for the idea of mercury partnerships insofar as monitoring, transparency, and accountability are ensured.

After long deliberations, delegates agreed to a draft decision, which they forwarded to the COW on Friday morning, where it was approved without amendment. Noting they were disproportionately affected by mercury contamination, Indigenous Peoples urged UNEP to support further long-term international action on mercury, including a legally-binding instrument, and questioned the US commitment toward addressing the detrimental effects of mercury contamination at the national level, as well as internationally. During the plenary on Friday, the US pledged more than US\$1 million to support the mercury programme and the partnerships approach contained in the draft decision, and urged interested parties to commit their resources, expertise and time to ensure that tangible progress is made as quickly as possible.

**Final Decision:** The decision (UNEP/GC.23/CW/L.4) contains four operative paragraphs on: cooperation between UNEP, relevant MEAs and other organizations; the SAICM; lead and cadmium; and the mercury programme.

In the section on MEAs, the GC/GMEF requests UNEP Executive Director, among others, to further promote cooperation with the Basel Convention Regional Centres in the implementation of other chemical-related MEAs and institutions, and to report on implementation of the decision to GC-24/GMEF.

On the SAICM, the GC/GMEF requests the Executive Director to, *inter alia*, provide funding to support the further development of SAICM, and to report to GCSS-9/GMEF on the outcomes of the SAICM process for its endorsement by UNEP.

On lead and cadmium, the GC/GMEF requests the Executive Director to undertake a review of scientific information focusing on long-range environmental transport to inform future discussions on the need for global action on lead and cadmium.

On mercury, the GC/GMEF, *inter alia*:

- requests the UNEP Executive Director to further develop UNEP's mercury programme by initiating, preparing and disseminating a report summarizing supply, trade and demand information on mercury;
- requests governments, the private sector and international organizations to take immediate actions to reduce the risks posed on a global scale by mercury in products and production processes;
- urges governments, intergovernmental organizations, NGOs and the private sector to develop and implement partnerships in a clear, transparent and accountable manner, as one approach to reducing the risks to human health and the environment from the release of mercury and its compounds;
- concludes that further long-term international action is required to reduce such risks;
- requests the UNEP Executive Director to present a report on progress in the implementation of the decision as it relates to mercury to GC-24/GMEF; and
- decides to assess the need for further action on mercury, including the possibility of a legally-binding instrument, partnerships, and other actions at GC-24/GMEF.

**UNEP's water policy and strategy:** This draft decision, originally drafted by the CPR, was introduced by the Secretariat in the COW on Monday, 21 February. The draft decision was referred to the drafting group, where it underwent several readings from Tuesday through the early morning hours on Friday. The decision was adopted in the plenary on Friday.

In the COW discussions, delegates asked for clarifications and made comments on the substance of the updated water policy, its financial and technical implications, and the need for the proposed advisory board for water-related issues, given the existence of a similar body established by the UN Secretary-General.

The drafting group addressed a number of contentious issues: including preambular language on the 2015 target of access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. Brazil, on behalf of the Latin America and Caribbean Group, suggested new preambular text referring to Principle 2 of the Rio Declaration. The EU suggested including Principles 3 and 4, Canada proposed Principles 10 and 11, and Egypt suggested adding Principle 7. Some delegations noted that this enumeration diluted the original purpose of the Brazilian proposal, but the long discussion on the merits of various principles resulted in the inclusion of all of them. The other problem concerned the status of UNEP's updated water policy and strategy, with Egypt, Brazil and several others pointing to difficulties in different parts of the document. Consequently, they suggested to "take note" of the strategy, rather than to "adopt" it. The timetable for the strategy's review and/or revision was discussed, with Australia suggesting an early date for its circulation, and Egypt preferring a later one.

The incorporation of the ecosystem approach into integrated water resource management was also debated, with Switzerland, Mexico and the EU insisting on its inclusion, and Egypt and Nigeria arguing against it. In this connection, Egypt proposed that the IWRM be tailored to countries' specific circumstances. The US suggested deletion of references to "environmental sustainability," and the Russian Federation, supported by the US and Nigeria, suggested deleting a reference to the work done by the UN



Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation. The G-77/China called for UNEP to develop a comprehensive framework on sanitation. The drafting group also debated the way of referencing upcoming meetings, including CSD-13, and access to water by the poor.

**Final Decision:** In the decision (UNEP/GC.23/L.5), the GC/GMEF adopts UNEP's updated policy and strategy as a general framework/guidance for its activities in the field of water and sanitation, and notes governments' reservations on substantive and procedural issues in developing the strategy. The GC/GMEF recommends that the Executive Director, in his review of the water policy, take into account several concepts (including ecosystem approaches to IWRM, and others) and ensure that it contributes to the achievement of internationally agreed goals contained in the Millennium Declaration and the JPOI. The GC/GMEF also welcomes the offer by China to host the second Intergovernmental Review Meeting of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA) in 2006.

**International environmental governance:** This omnibus draft decision prepared by the CPR was introduced by the Secretariat in the COW on Tuesday, 22 February. The draft decision was subsequently addressed in the drafting group from Tuesday, 22 February, until the last session, which terminated early in the morning on Friday, 25 February. The decision was approved by the plenary on Friday, without amendment, with the US stating that it would not participate in the implementation of the voluntary indicative scale of contributions.

In the COW, a number of delegations offered views on different sections of the decision, focusing on the need to implement the Bali Strategic Plan and strengthen UNEP's financial base.

In the drafting group, difficulties arose in the draft decision's preambular section, which embraces all components of IEG and refers to the "need for a strengthened institutional structure for IEG" and to the "ongoing consideration of UNEP's governing structure." The G-77/China and several other countries suggested deleting the preambular section and the references, the Russian Federation objected to qualifying the ongoing consideration of the issues mentioned, and the US proposed referring exclusively to "the important but complex issue of universal membership." The G-77/China proposed deleting a reference to "good governance" in the context of capacity building, while Canada suggested alternative language in a separate paragraph on good governance that would embrace international governance. A prolonged discussion on the subject resulted in dropping references to good governance.

Discussion on the draft decision's section on the Bali Strategic Plan centered on financial resources for the Plan's implementation.

The issue of strengthening the scientific base of UNEP focused on the proposed Environmental Watch, which aimed to, *inter alia*, promote interaction between science and policy-making for addressing gaps and needs and setting priorities for processes related to keeping under review the world environmental situation. Most countries expressed preference for a process where the Executive Director would take into account governments' views on the proposed Environmental Watch framework, with the G-77/China and some others questioning the initiative.

On the issue of universal membership, countries' positions remained entrenched, with the US, the Russian Federation and Japan objecting to the notion, and the EU arguing in favor.

On strengthening UNEP's financial base, opposing views were expressed on whether the voluntary indicative scale of contributions to the Environment Fund should be extended or dropped altogether.

The discussion on MEAs emphasized the independent decision-making authority of MEAs.

**Final Decision:** The decision (UNEP/GC.23/L.5/Add.1) contains six sections on the Bali Strategic Plan, strengthening the scientific base of UNEP, universal membership of the GC, strengthening UNEP's financial base, MEAs, and enhancing coordination across the UN system and the Environmental Management Group (EMG).

On the Bali Strategic Plan, the GC/GMEF requests the Executive Director to give high priority to its immediate implementation, and to work out a resource mobilization strategy, and invites governments in a position to do so to provide necessary additional resources.

On strengthening the scientific base of UNEP, the GC/GMEF recognizes the need to strengthen UNEP's scientific base, as recommended by intergovernmental consultations, and requests the Executive Director to update his proposal for an environment watch framework and to submit it to governments for their views, to enable submission of a report to GCSS-9/GMEF.

On universal membership, the GC/GMEF notes the different views expressed on this "important but complex issue," and decides to undertake its further consideration during ministerial consultations at GCSS-9/GMEF, in order to provide input to the Secretary-General's report at the 61st session of the UN General Assembly.

On strengthening UNEP's financial base, the GC/GMEF emphasizes the need for stable, adequate and predictable financial resources for UNEP, encourages governments to prefer such contributions over earmarked trust funds, and requests the Executive Director to notify member States of his proposal on the voluntary scale of contributions for 2006-2007.

On MEAs, the GC/GMEF requests the Executive Director to improve coordination and synergy among and effectiveness of MEAs, taking into account their Conferences of the Parties' autonomous decision-making authority, and to support implementation by parties to those agreements.

On enhancing coordination across the UN system and the EMG, the GC/GMEF acknowledges the report on the work of the EMG and the assessment of its location, and calls upon the Executive Director to initiate discussions with the EMG members and the CPR and report to GC-24/GMEF.

**Strengthening environmental emergency response and developing disaster prevention, preparedness, mitigation and early warning systems in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster:**

This draft decision was tabled by the G-77/China in the COW on Monday, 21 February. Following informal consultations led by Indonesia on Thursday, 24 February, the COW agreed to forward the decision to the plenary for adoption. The plenary adopted the decision on Friday.

**Final Decision:** In the decision (UNEP/GC.23/CW/L.2/Add.2), the GC/GMEF requests the Executive Director to work in cooperation with the governments of the countries affected by the Indian Ocean Tsunami, in:

- providing appropriate expertise for supporting emergency environmental planning and assistance;
- assessing environmental impacts of the tsunami and the environmental aspects of any subsequent risks to human health and livelihoods;



- promoting the integration of environmental consideration into wider mitigation, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts; and
- promoting in the reconstruction efforts, in particular, international cooperation in the use of renewable energy technologies, as appropriate.

The GC/GMEF also requests the Executive Director to continue developing, in close consultation with governments, relevant international institutions and MEA secretariats: an environmental approach to the identification and assessment of areas that are potentially at risk from natural and human-induced disasters, noting that intact mangrove and coral-reef ecosystems may help protect shorelines and islands; and guidelines outlining procedures and methodologies for environmental assessments of natural and human-induced disasters. The GC/GMEF also invites governments and relevant institutions to provide extra-budgetary resources, on a voluntary basis for technical cooperation and capacity building, within the context of the Bali Strategic Plan, for strengthening national and local-level capacity for coping with the environmental hazards and risk reduction, early warning, preparedness, response and mitigation relating to natural and human-induced disasters.

**Environmental and equity considerations in the procurement practices of UNEP:** This issue was considered in the COW on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. On Friday, the COW agreed to forward the decision for adoption in the plenary.

The US presented a draft decision (UNEP/GC.23/L.1) on a sustainable procurement programme for UNEP acquisitions, which proposed a UNEP sustainable procurement programme whereby environmental considerations should become a normal part of UNEP purchasing practice. Noting that a sustainable procurement programme would discriminate against products and services originating in poor countries if they failed to comply with high environmental standards, the G-77/China expressed concern at the proposal.

On Thursday, the G-77/China presented a new draft decision. The US proposed deleting three references to equity because it was unclear what equity meant in this context. The EU said it was opposed to preambular text on trade as it did not want references to trade or to the WTO in the draft decision. The G-77/China clarified that equity meant no discrimination among providers. Several delegations proposed alternative wording, and the US agreed to delete the brackets around "equity," but suggested maintaining the reference to trade, bracketed by the EU. The EU opposed retaining the paragraph on trade. The G-77/China, the EU and the US met in a small group to come up with new compromise text, and discussed: including a reference to the mutual supportiveness of trade and environment and development with a view to achieving sustainable development; deleting the reference to trade; and removing the brackets around "equity."

**Final Decision:** In the decision (UNEP/GC.23/CW/L.2/Add.2), the GC/GMEF invites governments to share with UNEP their experiences on environmental and equity considerations in procurement practices; and requests the Executive Director to prepare a compilation report on environmental and equity considerations regarding current procurement practices in UNEP and an assessment of its performance to present to GC-24/GMEF.

**Gender equality and the environment:** This issue was introduced in the ministerial consultations on Tuesday and discussed in informal consultations throughout the week and in the COW on Friday. The draft decision was adopted in Friday's plenary without amendment.

In the ministerial consultations, Rejoice Mabudhafasi, South Africa's Deputy Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, stressed the importance of women in decision-making, called for a gender focus on climate change vulnerability and mitigation, and noted the impossibility of sustainable development without women's empowerment and gender equality. In the discussion, a number of participants expressed support for a draft decision on gender equality and the environment submitted by Sweden, and stressed various aspects of gender equality, including: increased women's presence at all decision-making levels; women's involvement in environmental impact assessments; free market access for women; access to education for women; and promoting women's environmental rights, eliminating gender discrimination, and giving women equal decision-making power.

Informal consultations, facilitated by Jacob Ström (Sweden), were held to work on the draft decision. On Friday, Ström explained that the decision was the result of the work of a network of women ministers from all regions. Rather than looking for new agreements on gender equality, the objective was to adopt concrete measures on how to implement the Fourth World Conference on Women's Beijing Declaration. He stressed that the decision had been delicately drafted to represent the outcomes of UNEP's first Global Women's Assembly on Environment meeting in October 2004 and their subsequent deliberations.

**Final Decision:** In the decision, (UNEP/GC.23/CW/CRP.3), the GC/GMEF requests the Executive Director to: develop and promote a set of gender-equality criteria for the implementation of programmes; apply UNEP's gender-sensitivity guidelines; and assist governments, subject to the availability of extra-budgetary resources, in building capacity for gender mainstreaming in the context of the Bali Strategic Plan.

**Poverty and the environment:** This draft decision was presented by the G-77/China in the COW on Thursday. On Friday, the COW agreed to forward the decision to the plenary, which adopted it without amendment.

In the COW, opposition was raised by US and the EU due to the late submission of the decision, whereas Norway, the Russian Federation and the League of Arab States expressed their support. In the final plenary, the US and the EU reiterated their discontent with the late introduction of new decision, and the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) raised concerns regarding work duplication since the decision covers areas within DESA's mandate and expertise.

**Final Decision:** In the decision (UNEP/GC.23/CRP.6), the GC/GMEF requests the Executive Director to increase activities that promote understanding of the linkages between poverty and the environment, and to assist governments in integrating environmental decision making into social and economic policy on poverty eradication within UNEP's mandate.

**Keeping the world environment situation under review:** This draft decision was discussed in the COW on Wednesday. Following amendments by delegations, the COW agreed to forward the decision to the plenary, which adopted it on Friday.

In the COW discussions, delegates agreed to delete preambular paragraphs on the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), and to an amendment on the operative paragraph welcoming the Executive Director's report on activities and plans for supporting the 10-year implementation plan of the GEOSS. Following amendments by the US, delegates agreed to two new paragraphs tabled by the G-77/China, which address the process for developing the fourth Global Environment Outlook (GEO) report. Following informal consultations led by Canada, delegates agreed



to the paragraph dealing with climate change. They also approved a new paragraph proposed by the US to reference the work of regional and global organizations.

**Final Decision:** In the decision (UNEP/GC.23/L.2/Add.1), the GC/GMEF decides that the feature focus of the GEO 2005-2006 yearbook should be on energy and air pollution. The GC/GMEF requests the Executive Director to keep under review: human health aspects of environmental change in cooperation with the scientific community and other international organizations; emerging scientific evidence relating to climate change, and to report on new developments; and to establish a process of developing GEO-4 as an integrated assessment of the global environment. The GC/GMEF also calls on governments to: promote cooperation between health and environmental authorities to control emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases, and provide extra-budgetary resources for technical cooperation and capacity building within the Bali Strategic Plan and the proposed environment watch framework.

**Provisional agendas and dates and venues for GCSS-9/GMEF and GC-24/GMEF:** This draft decision was discussed in the COW on Wednesday. The COW agreed to forward the decision to the plenary for adoption, pending the agreement of the venue for GCSS-9/GMEF. The plenary adopted the decision on Friday.

Shafqat Kakakhel, UNEP, introduced the draft decision, which contains the draft agenda for GCSS-9/GMEF and GC-24/GMEF. He said the agenda for GCSS-9/GMEF had been designed specifically to enable governments to discuss energy issues in preparation for CSD-14, as well as chemicals management following the last SAICM PrepCom. Following minor amendments by the EU and Canada to the GCSS-9/GMEF agenda and by UNEP to the GC-24/GMEF agenda, the COW agreed to forward the draft decision to the plenary, pending the decision on the venue for GCSS-9/GMEF. In the plenary on Thursday, 24 February, the United Arab Emirates offered to host GCSS-9/GMEF, which was agreed to by acclamation.

**Final Decision:** In the decision, (GC23/CW/L2/Add 3), the GC/GMEF decides to hold GCSS-9/GMEF in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates, from 7-9 February 2006, and approves the provisional agenda with energy and environment and chemicals management as the major agenda items. The Council also decided to hold GC-24/GMEF in Nairobi from 5-9 February 2007, and approved the provisional agenda.

**Budget and the Programme of Work for the Biennium 2006-2007:** This agenda item and its draft decision were considered in the COW on Monday and throughout the week in a contact group chaired by Frédéric Renard (Belgium). The decision was adopted in plenary on Friday, where the US stated that it does not intend to increase contributions to fund any new UNEP positions.

In the COW, Shafqat Kakakhel, UNEP, presented the Environment Fund Budgets: Proposed Biennial Programme and Support Budget for 2006-2007 (UNEP/GC.23/8). Delegates then made preliminary remarks.

In the contact group, discussion focused on bracketed text in the draft decision, including: the Executive Director's authority to reallocate resources; an increase of the share of the UN regular budget allocated to the United Nations Office in Nairobi (UNON) and UNEP; and the budget for the implementation of the Bali Plan. On the Bali Strategic Plan, delegates agreed to a revised text requesting the Executive Director to present a report on the implementation of the Plan to GCSS-9/GMEF in 2006 and that the report should include implications of the Plan for the UNEP Programme of Work and Budget.

On the issue of the voluntary indicative scale of contributions, the US, the Russian Federation and Japan opposed a proposal on wider application of the scale, while many others supported it. The US suggested text urging governments to further support strengthening the Environment Fund through the mechanism envisaged in GCSS-7/GMEF decisions. Following informal consultations, delegates accepted the revised text that urges governments to support further strengthening of the Environment Fund through the options envisaged in GCSS/VII/1 on IEG, including the voluntary indicative scale of contributions.

Regarding the Executive Director's authority to reallocate resources, Switzerland proposed a compromised 10% reallocation authority without having to consult with the CPR. The US later presented new text requesting the Executive Director to consult with the CPR if he needs to reallocate funds in excess of 10%. The EU proposed text maintaining the 20% authority in the present form and requesting the CPR to consider the issue and make recommendations to the next GC regular session.

On the increase in the share of the UN regular budget allocated to UNON and UNEP, the US suggested new text calling for the allocation of an appropriate share of the UN regular budget allocated to UNEP.

The contact group considered new text on an increase of the UN regular budget to UNEP proposed by the US, which calls for an allocation of an appropriate share of the UN regular budget allocated to UNEP. It also refers to General Assembly resolution 2997, and underlines the need to consider the adequate reflection of the administrative and management costs of the Environment Programme within the context of the UN regular budget. Delegates approved this text with several amendments. Delegates also agreed to a new US proposal on the Executive Director's authority to reallocate resources, to a maximum of 10%, and to consult with the CPR if he needs to reallocate resources in excess of 10% and up to 20%.

**Final Decision:** In the decision (UNEP/GC.23/L.6), the GC/GMEF approves appropriations for the Environment Fund in the amount of US\$144 million for the biennial programme, which includes: environmental assessment and early warning; environmental policy development and law; environmental policy implementation; technology, industry and economics; regional cooperation and representation; environmental conventions; and communications and public information.

The GC/GMEF also requests governments to support the further strengthening of the Environment Fund through the options envisaged in GCSS/VII/1 on IEG, including the voluntary indicative scale of contributions. It authorizes the Executive Director to reallocate resources between budget lines up to a maximum of 10% of the appropriations to which the resources are reallocated, and requests him to consult with the CPR if he needs to reallocate resources in excess of 10% and up to 20%. The GC/GMEF requests the Executive Director to continue the shift in emphasis from delivery of outputs to achievements of results, and calls for an allocation of an appropriate share of the UN regular budget to UNEP. The GC/GMEF further requests the Executive Director to give high priority to the effective and immediate implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan and to undertake the work set out in his proposed road-maps for the Plan and present a report on the implementation to GCSS-9/GMEF.

**Administrative and other budgetary matters:** This draft decision was discussed in the contact group chaired by Frédéric Renard (Belgium). On Friday morning, the COW approved the



draft decision and sent it to the final plenary for adoption. On Friday afternoon, the final plenary adopted the decision without amendment.

The contact group considered the sub-programme on environmental conventions. Delegates debated but could not agree on whether a paragraph on pilot demonstration projects on implementation of equitable access and benefit-sharing arrangements in relation to several conventions, particularly the CBD and CITES, should be retained or deleted.

Delegates agreed to add new text to the draft decision, which requests the Executive Director to improve financial information flows between UNEP, UNON and convention secretariats. Regarding case studies on implementation of equitable access and benefit-sharing arrangements in relation to several conventions, delegates agreed to delete the word “equitable” before “access and benefit-sharing.”

**Final Decision:** In the decision (UNEP/GC.23/CW/L.3), the GC/GMEF approves the proposed action of the Executive Director to reduce the number of trust funds, and extends the duration of a number of trust funds for various programme activities. The GC/GMEF further requests the Executive Director to report to the CPR on further progress on loan draw-downs and the status of the construction project, and to improve financial information flows between UNEP and MEA secretariats.

#### **CLOSING PLENARY**

During the closing plenary on Friday afternoon, 25 February, Vice-President Laurent Sedogo introduced the draft proceedings of the Governing Council/Global Environmental Ministerial Forum at its twenty-third session (UNEP/GC.23/L.2 and Add.1), which were adopted with minor amendments.

Vice President Sedogo then invited regional groups to make closing remarks. Mexico, on behalf of the Latin America and Caribbean Group, emphasized that the Group attaches great importance to the Bali Strategic Plan that will come into effect this year, and commended everyone for the various decisions adopted, including those on water and chemicals.

Sweden, on behalf of the Western European and Others Group, said they were pleased to work with all the delegations and underscored that this Governing Council meeting had been an exceptionally good one.

Saudi Arabia, for the Asian Group, hoped that the adoption of the Bali Strategic Plan would ensure an “environmental upgrade” of their region.

Cuba, on behalf of the G-77/China, commended the exceptionally high-level of collaboration and cooperation among delegations, which ensured the success of this Governing Council meeting. He urged all delegations to speedily and immediately implement the Bali Strategic Plan.

The UK, on behalf of the EU, acceding countries and Iceland, emphasized that the EU was satisfied with the decisions adopted, including the Bali Strategic Plan and those related to chemicals, gender equality, poverty and the environment, and water. He welcomed the GC/GMEF’s input to CSD-13 and the General Assembly High-Level Plenary Meeting. He also expressed thanks to all those who had contributed to the meeting’s success, including the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin*.

UNEP Executive Director Klaus Töpfer said this was the most important GC/GMEF meeting in UNEP’s history, and expressed UNEP’s commitment to promote the integration of the environment into every component of the development agenda. Noting that this is a crucial year for the UN system, on the way to a major

reform, he emphasized the need for the UN to prove its ability to deal with current world challenges. Noting that the decisions adopted represent an important guideline to achieve that objective, he urged all member States and the CPR to make this a success story.

Citing Kenya’s problems as an example of drinking water scarcity, lack of sanitation, and land degradation and its relation with poverty, Professor Wangari Maathai, 2004 Nobel Peace Prize laureate, called on delegates to consider how to promote the MDGs and sustainable development in Africa. She expressed hope that the Bali Strategic Plan would empower people in developing countries to utilize technology and resources for their own people. She said that, although we have come a long way from the 1972 Stockholm Conference, much remains to be done. However, she asked delegates: not to be discouraged by the immensity of the task ahead; to apply the four “Rs,” reduce, reuse, recycle, and repair; and to focus as individuals on the actions that can be done to protect the environment.

On behalf of the GC/GMEF President, Vice-President Sedogo expressed satisfaction at the result of the meeting in charting UNEP’s future course to realizing the MDGs, and said the session could be considered a landmark in the story of UNEP. Emphasizing the Bali Strategic Plan as a “leap into the future,” he called on governments to provide financial resources to support the plan within their capacities.

#### **A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF GC-23/GMEF**

As delegates left the UN complex in Gigiri on Friday evening, they collectively breathed a sigh of relief. Not only had they survived a complex, often chaotic, week-long meeting, with a lengthy agenda, a staggering number of events, and an immense volume of documentation, but they also managed to accomplish most of the objectives of GC-23/GMEF. In a meeting devoid of grandstanding and politicking, eased along by seasoned chairpersons and facilitators, delegates succeeded in approving a comprehensive work programme and a hefty spending programme, which rivaled the record set in Mostafa Tolba’s time. This is expected to generate new momentum for UNEP to exercise its mandate in a more effective fashion. This analysis looks at the main outcomes of GC-23/GMEF focusing on the Bali Strategic Plan, UNEP’s revised water policy and strategy, international environmental governance, and the value of the GMEF.

#### **STRATEGIC ACHIEVEMENT**

Expectedly, the formal adoption of the Bali Strategic Plan on Technology Support and Capacity Building was the high point of the session, and for some its main practical outcome. One of UNEP’s major undertakings in recent years, the Bali Strategic Plan captured the attention of developing country delegates, especially in Africa, where capacity building is the cornerstone of New Partnership for Africa’s Development. While the Bali Strategic Plan’s ambitious scope was universally commended, sober voices warned that it is still a skeleton in need of fat and muscle. The Plan has vast potential, and its implications are regarded by all as crucial. However, it is the financing of the Plan that will prove its success or undoing and, therefore, calls were issued for the Executive Director to put together a resource mobilization strategy as soon as possible, before the initiative loses momentum.



## **WATER**

The adoption of UNEP's updated water policy and strategy was another major outcome of the meeting. Nevertheless, several countries expressed their concerns on the status and content of the strategy. The ecosystem approach and the costing of water resources, promoted by Switzerland, did not receive the unreserved approval some hoped for, whether because of the potentially huge financial implications for downstream countries, or suspicions of conditionality feared by several developing countries, or because of political frictions in border areas, where water is a life and death strategic resource. Despite these problems, the strategy received a well deserved boost. The perseverance of the G-77/China ensured that a new dimension has been added to UNEP's water portfolio: sanitation, a pressing problem for the world's urban and rural poor. The strategy will be continuously updated, with the next circulation planned for 2006. There will be more government involvement and, consequently, ownership of a major UNEP activity, which is an appropriate contribution to the upcoming first policy session of the Commission on Sustainable Development's new multi-year programme of work.

## **CHEMICALS**

The GC/GMEF could not reach agreement on the need for an international legally-binding instrument on mercury. While accepting the gravity of the problem, countries have different conceptions of how to reach that goal. Switzerland and Norway's call for a binding instrument, which was supported by the EU, was opposed by the US, Australia and Japan, which prefer voluntary mercury partnerships. A good number of delegates thought this view reflected a "philosophical" stance toward international obligations, to ensure a less restricted playing field for business. The G-77/China also opposed negotiating a binding agreement at the present time, considering that the SAICM process has not yet been finalized and that many developing countries have little understanding of the mercury problem, or the capacity to address it. They remain skeptical of the ability of partnerships to deliver, given the poor record of the partnerships established during the WSSD process. Some delegates found it ironic that, despite the recognition of mercury as a genuinely global problem asking for a global solution, the GC went for a bilateral/regional case-by-case approach, as suggested by the US. Nevertheless, the problem was sufficiently highlighted to ensure a progress report from the Executive Director to consider the possibility of a binding instrument at GC-24/GMEF. In the meantime, given the hype over partnerships in the international environmental field, the report will be interesting in determining the extent to which the transparency, efficiency and accountability of partnerships could be ensured.

## **INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE**

The discussion on the perennial issue of international environmental governance, which comprises a set of structural initiatives dating from the GC/GMEF special session in Cartagena in 2000, encountered the same old underwater reefs. Serious divisions and well-entrenched positions persist, including the US/EU tectonic fissures.

The EU insisted on transforming the 58-member UNEP Governing Council to a universal body, but the US, Russia, Japan and some members of the G-77/China were clearly not prepared to go beyond acknowledging, for the umpteenth time, that universal membership was "an important but complex issue." As arguments for and against the proposition were dealt with across the negotiating table, the GC/GMEF failed to progress one inch. According

to some delegates, the EU's suggestion to establish, for the sake of "efficiency," an executive committee in a future universal GC has compounded the problem. A wizened delegate recalled the sad story of the EU-sponsored 36-member "High-level Committee of Ministers and Officials" of the late 1990s, which died of natural causes soon after being established, and hardly ever mourned.

Although the idea of transforming UNEP into a UN agency did not figure in discussions in Nairobi, its unseen presence hovered in the corridors. The proponents of the idea must have derived some satisfaction from what they see as "salami tactics," inexorably slicing off paper-thin pieces of resistance, both on universal membership and the voluntary indicative scale of contributions. Rather than being driven off the agenda, the latter was given a new lease on life in the next biennium.

While there was general agreement that the scientific base of UNEP needs strengthening, delegates diverged on ways of achieving this goal. In this context, the idea of the "Environment Watch," strongly promoted by UNEP, received a mixed reception. Although the concept generated interest, a number of countries had qualms about an all-embracing process, or even less, a structure, to govern assessment and monitoring. The fate of the "assessment super panel," first proposed by Norway during the IEG process and a contentious issue during GC-22/GMEF, was apparently fresh in their memory. In the end, delegates agreed to tread a cautious path, which would commence with gathering views of governments before taking definite action.

## **GMEF: THE HOME OF THE ENVIRONMENT PILLAR**

There were always mixed feelings about the added value of the Global Ministerial Environment Forum (essentially the ministerial portion of the Governing Council session), and questions were asked on whether it was running out of steam. The majority view at this session was that the Forum has proved to be a useful place for high-level exchanges, although some felt that there is space for improvement, such as providing a chance to talk informally in a more relaxed setting.

The GC President's summary of ministerial discussions centered on a crucial issue: the environmental underpinning of the Millennium Development Goals of poverty eradication, environmental sustainability in water, sanitation and human settlements, and gender equality. By thoroughly discussing these critical areas and producing a set of sensible recommendations to governments and to UNEP, the GMEF has spelled out the critical environmental link to the central challenge of achieving the goals of Millennium Declaration and the WSSD. In light of the upcoming meeting of the Commission on Sustainable Development and the UN General Assembly High-Level Plenary Meeting on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, the environment ministers' discussions in Nairobi may not only help operationalize the link between UNEP and the MDGs, but, in the words of COW Chair Beat Nobs, provide a vehicle to address the environmental pillar of sustainable development. This link will be even more reinforced if the ministers come to CSD in April and to the UN General Assembly in September.

The summary, as some were quick to point out, was not a negotiated output, and it added to the growing number of documents which, in a legal sense, are not owned by governments. True, the number of such "soft law" statements, communiqués and strategies is growing in the UNEP framework, but they acquire authority through the power of their substance and political message.

**FORWARD TO DUBAI**

With the next special session of the GC/GMEF scheduled for early 2006 in Dubai, UNEP has a clear mandate to advance the global environment debate, by exhibiting its ability to meet GC-23/GMEF's action-oriented elements and unleashing its hidden strength as the home of environment in the UN system. As Canada noted, multilateralism is crucial for IEG, and GC-23/GMEF has reinforced the role of the environment in multi-lateral efforts, as witnessed in the session's responses to the Indian Ocean Tsunami and its recognition of the need for UNEP to react to human-induced disasters.

In addition, Executive Director Klaus Töpfer made an intriguing remark in the final plenary that UNEP will have to engage in in-house reform. Some delegates understood this as an attempt to address a new and ambitious UNEP agenda, larger than at any moment in its history, a reflection of UNEP's current trend of gradually moving into implementation. Töpfer also mentioned the Nairobi-based Committee of Permanent Representatives, a body that maintains daily personal links with the Secretariat, monitors its performance and drafts decisions for the Governing Council. Some countries do hope for the CPR's stronger involvement, in particular at GC sessions, if this body is to be a success. A delegate mused that UNEP's future performance might benefit from applying, albeit sensibly, the maxim cited at the session's final plenary by Nobel Laureate Wangari Mathai: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and Repair.

**UPCOMING MEETINGS**

**FIRST NRG4SD SUMMIT:** The first Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development Summit will take place from 10-12 March 2005, in Lake Toba, Indonesia. Convening under the theme "Global Partnership on Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Post-Disaster Settlements," participants will have opportunities to forge partnerships at the regional level within the UN system on areas such as disaster early warning systems, and rehabilitation and reconstruction of post disaster settlements. For more information, contact: Maudhy S. Kisdharwanto, Summit Secretariat; tel: +62-21-7388-0888; fax: +62-21-7388-8172; e-mail: nrg4SD@LTS2005.net; internet: <http://www.dambaintra.org/toba.html>

**2ND INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON PARTNERSHIPS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: ADVANCING IMPLEMENTATION ON WATER AND ENERGY:** This meeting is scheduled to be held from 21-23 March 2005, in Marrakesh, Morocco. For more information, contact: Moroccan Ministry of Territory Planning, Water and Environment; tel: +212-37-77-26-62; fax: +212-37-77-26-40; e-mail: [forum@minenv.gov.ma](mailto:forum@minenv.gov.ma); internet: <http://www.minenv.gov.ma/forum-part.2005/1>

**MEETING ON ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE: CAN REGIONAL FRAMEWORKS HELP SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:** This meeting will take place on 24 March 2005, in New York. The conference is being organized by the United Nations University (UNU) in collaboration with the UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). For more information, contact: UNU's Office at the United Nations; tel: +1-212-963-6387 fax: +1-212-371-9454; e-mail: [unuona@ony.unu.edu](mailto:unuona@ony.unu.edu); internet: [http://www.unu.edu/hq/rector\\_office/events2005/events2005.html](http://www.unu.edu/hq/rector_office/events2005/events2005.html)

**FIFTH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC:**

This conference will take place from 24-29 March 2005, in Seoul, Republic of Korea. For more information, contact: Ministry of Environment, Republic of Korea; tel: +82-2-2110-6565; fax: +82-2-503-8773; e-mail: [hyejungy@me.go.kr](mailto:hyejungy@me.go.kr); internet: <http://www.mced2005seoul.org>

**20TH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL OF UN-HABITAT:** The 20th session of the Governing Council for the UN Human Settlements Programme will take place from 4-8 April 2005, at UN-HABITAT's headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. For more information, contact: Joseph Mungai, Secretary to the Governing Council and Chief, External Relations and Interagency Affairs; tel: +254-2-23133/623132/623131; fax: +254-2-624175/624250; e-mail: [habitat@unhabitat.org](mailto:habitat@unhabitat.org); internet: <http://www.unhabitat.org>

**13TH SESSION OF THE UN COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:** The 13th session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development will take place from 11-22 April 2005, in New York. For more information, contact the Division for Sustainable Development Secretariat; tel: +1-212-963-3170; fax: +1-212-963-4260; e-mail: [dsd@un.org](mailto:dsd@un.org); internet: [http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd13/csd13\\_2004.htm](http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd13/csd13_2004.htm)

**OECD FORUM 2005: FUELLING THE FUTURE: SECURITY, STABILITY, DEVELOPMENT AND OECD MINISTERIAL SUMMIT:** The Forum will take place from 2-3 May 2005, in Paris, France. The OECD Forum 2005 will consider policy issues in the areas of international trade and investment, economic development, the Millennium Declaration, and energy. This multi-stakeholder summit will feed into the OECD Ministerial Summit, which will take place after the Forum from 3-4 May. For more information contact: John West, Forum Director; tel: +33-1-45-248-025; e-mail: [john.west@oecd.org](mailto:john.west@oecd.org); internet: [http://www.oecd.org/site/0,2865,en\\_21571361\\_34225293\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/site/0,2865,en_21571361_34225293_1_1_1_1_1,00.html)

**FIRST MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF PARTIES TO THE STOCKHOLM CONVENTION ON POPS: COP-1** will take place from 2-6 May 2005, in Punta del Este, Uruguay. For more information, contact: Interim Secretariat for the Stockholm Convention; tel: +41-22-917-8191; fax: +41-22-797-3460; e-mail: [ssc@chemicals.unep.ch](mailto:ssc@chemicals.unep.ch); internet: <http://www.chem.unep.ch/pops>

**UNCCD THIRD SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION (CRIC 3):** CRIC 3 will take place from 2-11 May 2005, in Bonn, Germany. For more information, contact: UNCCD Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-2802; fax: +49-228-815-2898/99; e-mail: [secretariat@unccd.int](mailto:secretariat@unccd.int); internet: <http://www.unccd.int/>

**UN SYMPOSIUM ON INTEGRATED IMPLEMENTATION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS:** This symposium will take place from 11-13 May 2005, in Nanchang, China. It is co-sponsored by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in collaboration with the Provincial Government of Jiangxi, and will address the integrated implementation of sustainable development goals and targets. For more information contact: Zhu Juwang, Senior Economic Affairs Officer, DESA; tel: +1-212-963-0380; fax: +1-212-963-4260; e-mail: [zhu@un.org](mailto:zhu@un.org); internet: [http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/calendar/symposium\\_announcement.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/calendar/symposium_announcement.pdf)



**TWENTY-SECOND SESSIONS OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODIES OF UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE:** This meeting will take place from 16-27 May 2005, in Bonn, Germany. For more information, contact: UNFCCC Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-1000; fax: +49-228-815-1999; e-mail: [secretariat@unfccc.int](mailto:secretariat@unfccc.int); internet: <http://www.unfccc.int/>

**FIFTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS FORUM ON FORESTS (UNFF-5):** The fifth session of the UNFF will take place from 16-27 May 2005, in New York. For more information, contact: Mia Soderlund, UNFF Secretariat; tel: +1-212-963-3262; fax: +1-212-963-4260; e-mail: [unff@un.org](mailto:unff@un.org); internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/forests.htm>

**SECOND MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE UNECE CONVENTION ON ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE IN ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS (AARHUS CONVENTION):** This meeting will be held from 25-27 May 2005, in Almaty, Kazakhstan. It will review the progress achieved in the Aarhus Convention's implementation and will reflect on and plan for future challenges. The meeting will also discuss the main developments at both global and regional levels in relation to Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and how the Aarhus Convention may contribute to efforts to make progress in other regions. For more information, contact: Ella Behlyarova, Environmental Affairs Officer, ECE; tel: +41-22-917-2376; fax: +41-22-917-0107; e-mail: [Ella.Behlyarova@unece.org](mailto:Ella.Behlyarova@unece.org); internet: <http://www.unece.org/env/pp/mop2.htm>

**SECOND MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES SERVING AS THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL ON BIOSAFETY (COP/MOP-2):** This meeting will take place from 30 May to 3 June 2005, in Montreal, Canada. For more information, contact: CBD Secretariat; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: [secretariat@biodiv.org](mailto:secretariat@biodiv.org); internet: <http://www.biodiv.org/doc/meeting.aspx?mtg=MOP-02>

**GEF CONSULTATIONS AND COUNCIL MEETING:** These meetings will take place from 6-10 June 2005, in Washington, DC. For more information, contact: GEF Secretariat; tel: +1-202-473-0508; fax: +1-202-522-3240; e-mail: [secretariat@TheGEF.org](mailto:secretariat@TheGEF.org); internet: [http://www.gefweb.org/Outreach/Meetings\\_Events/meetings\\_events.html](http://www.gefweb.org/Outreach/Meetings_Events/meetings_events.html)

**WORLD URBAN FORUM III:** This meeting will take place from 19-23 June 2006, in Vancouver, Canada. It is organized by UN-HABITAT and the Canadian government. For more information, contact: Lars Reutersward, Information Services Section, UN-HABITAT; tel: +254-20-623120; fax: +254-20-623477; e-mail: [Lars.Reutersward@unhabitat.org](mailto:Lars.Reutersward@unhabitat.org); internet: <http://www.unhabitat.org/wuf/2006/default.asp>

**SOUTH SUMMIT:** The second South Summit is scheduled to be held from 12-16 June 2005, in Doha, Qatar. For more information, contact: Office of the Chairman of the Group of 77; tel: +1-212-963-0192; fax: +1-212-963-3515; e-mail: [g77off@unmail.org](mailto:g77off@unmail.org); internet: <http://www.g77.org/meetings/daily.html>

**WORLD WATER WEEK:** This event, organized by the Stockholm International Water Institute, will be held in Stockholm, Sweden, from 21-27 August 2005. The event is a global gathering of leading experts from the business, civil society, governmental, inter-governmental, scientific, and water management sectors. The Stockholm Water Symposium forms a part of the event. For more

information, contact the Stockholm International Water Institute; tel: +46-8-522-139-60; fax: +46-8-522-139-61; e-mail: [sympos@siwi.org](mailto:sympos@siwi.org); internet: <http://www.worldwaterweek.org> and <http://www.siwi.org>

**WTO COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND ENVIRONMENT:** The Committee on Trade and Environment will meet from 7-8 July and 12 October 2005. For more information, contact: WTO Secretariat; tel: +41-22-739-5111; fax: +41-22-731-4206; e-mail: [enquiries@wto.org](mailto:enquiries@wto.org); internet: [http://www.wto.org/english/news\\_e/meets.pdf](http://www.wto.org/english/news_e/meets.pdf)

**HIGH-LEVEL PLENARY MEETING OF THE 60TH SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON THE FOLLOW-UP TO THE OUTCOME OF THE MILLENNIUM SUMMIT:** This meeting will take place from 14-16 September 2005, at UN headquarters in New York. The meeting is expected to undertake a comprehensive review of the progress made towards the commitments articulated in the UN Millennium Declaration. The event will also review progress made in the integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes and commitments of the major UN conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields. For more information, contact: Office of the President of the General Assembly; tel: +1-212-963-2486; fax: +1-212-963-3301; internet: <http://www.un.org/ga/>

**SAICM PREPCOM-3:** The third meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the development of a Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) will be held in Vienna, Austria, from 19-24 September 2005. SAICM consultations for the following regions are being organized from February to May 2005: Africa (Saly, Senegal, 15-18 March); Asia-Pacific (Bangkok, Thailand, 4-7 April); Latin American and Caribbean (Punta del Este, Uruguay, 27-29 April); and Central and Eastern European (Ljubljana, Slovenia, 17-19 May). For more information, contact: UNEP Chemicals; tel: +41-22-917-8111; fax: +41-22-797-3460; e-mail: [chemicals@unep.ch](mailto:chemicals@unep.ch); internet: <http://www.chem.unep.ch/saicm/>

**FIRST INTERNATIONAL MARINE PROTECTED AREAS CONGRESS:** This congress will take place from 23-27 October 2005, in Geelong, Australia. For more information, contact: Congress Organizers; tel: +61-3-5983-2400; fax: +61-3-5983-2223; e-mail: [mp@asnevents.net.au](mailto:mp@asnevents.net.au); internet: <http://www.impacongress.org/>

**UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE COP-11 and COP/MOP 1:** The 11th Conference of the Parties (COP-11) and first session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (COP/MOP 1) will take place in Montreal, Canada, from 28 November to 9 December 2005. For more information, contact: UNFCCC Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-1000; fax: +49-228-815-1999; e-mail: [secretariat@unfccc.int](mailto:secretariat@unfccc.int); internet: <http://www.unfccc.int/>

**SIXTH WTO MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE:** The WTO Ministerial Conference will take place from 13-18 December 2005, in Hong Kong, China. For more information, contact: WTO Secretariat; tel: +41-22-739-5111; fax: +41-22-731-4206; e-mail: [enquiries@wto.org](mailto:enquiries@wto.org); internet: [http://www.wto.org/english/thewto\\_e/minist\\_e/min05\\_e/min05\\_e.htm](http://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/minist_e/min05_e/min05_e.htm)

**NINTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL/SEVENTH GLOBAL MINISTERIAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM:** This meeting will take place from 7-9 February 2006, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. For more information, contact: Secretary for UNEP Governing Council; tel: +254-2-623431/623411; fax: +254-2-623929/623748; e-mail: [beverly.miller@unep.org](mailto:beverly.miller@unep.org); internet: <http://www.unep.org>