

UNCSD INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS: FRIDAY 27, APRIL 2012

On Friday, delegates continued informal negotiations on the draft outcome document for the UNCSD. WG1 completed its first reading on Section V (Framework for Action) in morning and afternoon sessions. WG2 continued discussions on Section IV (IFSD), and exchanged views on IFSD reform options in the afternoon. A stocktaking plenary was held in the afternoon to discuss progress made and organization of work for the coming week. A number of side events were also convened.

WORKING GROUP 1

SECTION V: MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION: *Finance:*

On the provision of financing to developing countries (CST pre 112), the US, with CANADA, removed reference to “substantial increases in.” The EU added new text resolving to seek “new partnerships and promising innovative sources of development finance” that can be used alongside traditional MOI.

The G-77/CHINA proposed a new subparagraph on increasing “the core resources of UN funds and programmes as part of wider efforts to mobilize new, additional and predictable resources.”

On the role of international finance institutions (IFIs) (CST 113 quat), the G-77/CHINA deleted reference to, *inter alia*, IFIs fostering national efforts towards sustainable development through the incorporation of environmentally and socially sound criteria.

On innovative sources of finance (CST 114 ter), the G-77/CHINA added language on mobilizing “necessary and predictable resources to the tune of US\$XXX, by 2020 for meeting the goals” agreed to at Rio+20.

On public and private sources of finance (CST 116), NORWAY added “tax reform” and the EU added “trade” to the list of possible means of finance apart from ODA. NORWAY, with the EU, asked to retain reference to the UN Convention against Corruption from the compilation text (114 bis).

Science and Technology: On intellectual property rights and identifying options for an appropriate mechanism to facilitate clean technology dissemination (CST 118 ter), the US, supported by CANADA and JAPAN, asked to delete the paragraph. The G-77/CHINA recommended a separate paragraph on clean technology dissemination.

On strengthening international cooperation to promote investment in science, innovation and technology (CST 120), the G-77/CHINA added reference to “cleaner fossil fuel technologies.”

On strengthening the science-policy interface (CST 120 ter), CANADA asked to delete reference to the option of establishing an intergovernmental panel of experts on sustainable

development. The G-77/CHINA bracketed text on requesting the UN Secretary-General to report on options for strengthening the science-policy interface.

Capacity Building: On building resource-efficient economies and promoting SCP patterns (CST 123 bis), the EU suggested text on “supporting public-private partnerships.” On enabling developing countries to undertake effective adaptation strategies (CST 123 ter), the US, with CANADA, proposed language on “the importance of” financial, technological and capacity-building assistance, whereas NORWAY proposed “urging all developed countries to increase” such assistance. SWITZERLAND added reference to “disaster risk reduction and preparedness.”

Trade: On the importance of trade (CST pre 124), the G-77/CHINA proposed, and NEW ZEALAND opposed, deleting reference to “meaningful trade liberalization.”

The G-77/CHINA asked to retain its proposals on market access (pre 124 bis), access to medicines (pre 124 ter), inclusiveness and transparency at the World Trade Organization (WTO) (124 bis), and implementing aid for trade commitments (127 bis).

On trade in environmental goods and services (CST 125 bis), the G-77/CHINA asked to delete the paragraph. SWITZERLAND added text on the relationship between WTO rules and MEA trade obligations.

On subsidies (CST 126), the G-77/CHINA asked to delete the paragraph. JAPAN, with the US, sought deletion of reference to agricultural and fisheries subsidies. CANADA modified reference to reducing fossil fuel subsidies to those that are inefficient and cause wasteful consumption.

On aid for trade (CST 127), the G-77/CHINA, supported by NEW ZEALAND, sought deletion of text on trade facilitation assistance associated with green economy.

Registry/compendium of commitments: The US introduced its proposal for a compendium of commitments (128 alt) and encouraged all participants to register voluntary commitments and make them publicly available. SWITZERLAND generally supported the idea, but asked to retain a proposal from the compilation text detailing a follow-up mechanism (128).

WORKING GROUP 2

SECTION IV: INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: **Regional, national, local:**

On sustainable development strategies (CST 59), the G-77/CHINA, supported by the REPUBLIC OF KOREA, proposed deletion of “commitments” in reference to sustainable development commitments.

On regional and sub-regional organizations (CST 60), KAZAKHSTAN requested mention of the Green Bridge Partnership as a regional initiative. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA suggested this initiative be referred to elsewhere and the

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relevant text was moved to a separate paragraph (CST 62 ter). MEXICO proposed additional text urging “the strengthening of UN regional commissions and sub-regional offices,” and emphasizing “resource allocation.” The EU, the US and JAPAN did not support Mexico’s proposal, and CANADA reserved.

On strengthening institutions (CST 61), the G-77/CHINA requested deletion of “multistakeholder councils,” emphasizing that the nature of institutions and processes is decided by member States.

A new paragraph (CST 62 bis) was suggested based on an earlier proposal from the G-77/China on undertaking concrete actions including through an international mechanism to bridge the technology gap. BELARUS said this paragraph is one of the essential elements of the outcome document. MEXICO added language on, *inter alia*, supporting existing international centers for technology transfer.

Another new paragraph (CST 62 quat) was suggested, based on an earlier proposal from Switzerland on ensuring long-term political commitment and undertaking actions to enact clear and effective legislation for sustainable development.

Conceptual discussion on IFSD: Co-Chair Ashe invited delegates to exchange views on options for IFSD (paragraphs 48 to 51 of the compilation text). The EU said that functionality should be considered, before institutional arrangements. MEXICO suggested the UN requires “a common space” to review an integrated agenda for development. He argued for ECOSOC to play a key role in follow-up of the Rio agenda.

SWITZERLAND said that the two aspects on which reform is needed (IFSD and international environmental governance) should be addressed through a similar approach, which includes: recalling the main functions to be achieved; and identifying measures that will help deliver these functions. He highlighted the need for agreement on these two elements before deciding on the most appropriate institutions.

TURKEY stressed the need for making use of existing structures, such as ECOSOC. The US expressed a strong preference for working with existing institutions.

AUSTRALIA stressed better integration of the three pillars of sustainable development, and said reform should, *inter alia*, provide a high political level of engagement, deliver results on the ground, and consider the role of existing institutions. CANADA called for ECOSOC to play a more integrated role in sustainable development, including seeking strategies for private sector engagement.

KAZAKHSTAN and NORWAY supported the SDC option. NORWAY recommended replacing the CSD with a SDC, which should: attract high-level ministerial participation; introduce a periodic peer review mechanism; and have a cross-sectoral mandate, such as follow-up of SDGs.

The REPUBLIC OF KOREA supported the creation of a SDC and a close working relationship with ECOSOC. JAPAN proposed reforming the CSD. LICHTENSTEIN suggested that IFSD should include: integration of the three pillars; accountability mechanisms to ensure implementation of previous policies and commitments; and more inclusive and high-level participation.

KENYA proposed undertaking reforms within the CSD without transforming it into a SDC, and also said that improving ECOSOC would help to achieve better integration of the three pillars.

ECOSOC Vice-President Luis Alfonso de Alba (Mexico) highlighted that ECOSOC would be the natural place for integrating the three pillars of sustainable development, but noted the challenge of convening relevant ministries.

The RUSSIAN FEDERATION favored strengthening existing institutions, and supported universal membership of the CSD and the UNEP Governing Council.

KENYA and the EU expressed support for upgrading UNEP to a specialized agency based in Nairobi, with KENYA specifying that this agency could, *inter alia*, take a leading coordinating role of MEAs in the UN system, and provide wide strategic planning for the environment.

TURKEY, the US, AUSTRALIA, JAPAN and others expressed support for strengthening UNEP. NORWAY proposed improving UNEP’s governance structure. JAPAN presented a step-by-step approach, which would prioritize enhancing collaboration of UNEP and the MEA Secretariats. CANADA favored improving UNEP’s current effectiveness. KAZAKHSTAN supported strengthening environmental institutions at all levels.

STOCKTAKING PLENARY

During the afternoon stocktaking plenary, the EU, with CANADA, supported the current process of two working groups. CANADA proposed redistributing the workload between the two groups, and was open to the idea of contact groups.

SWITZERLAND suggested thematic issues in Section V-A be addressed by experts in small groups, and highlighted that further conceptual thinking is needed on topics, including IFSD and MOI. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA asked whether the Co-Chairs could streamline the text at the end of next week. NEW ZEALAND suggested giving part of Section V-A to WG2 if the latter substantially finished its work on Sections I and II, and having a stocktaking plenary on Wednesday morning.

The US suggested leaving questions of placement of text to the Co-Chairs, and perhaps having small groups of interested delegations work on particular paragraphs or sections with deadlines to produce compromises. Co-Chair Kim suggested a contact group could look at Section V-A. After the plenary was suspended for informal consultations, the G-77/CHINA said that they would prefer to continue working in the two working groups, with the active facilitation of the Co-Chairs.

IN THE CORRIDORS

A colorful flowchart was displayed on Friday afternoon, indicating the shrinking of text from 278 pages on Monday morning to 157 pages by Friday afternoon, a percentage decrease of 44%. “We still have much work to do, but thankfully, we finished a first reading of Section V earlier than expected so we don’t have to spend the weekend in these rooms,” said one relieved observer.

WG2 finally began to address IFSD reform options in the afternoon. As expected, an exchange of views ensued, rather than negotiation of any text, as governments are still developing their positions on this issue. A veteran of the first Rio process commented that 20 years ago, the refrain was “no new institutions.” “I feel like we have been here before,” he said, noting, however, that current structures are widely observed not to be working. Referring to the proposals of some to upgrade UNEP to a specialized agency, one participant said “If, in the view of some, there is undue emphasis on strengthening one pillar, then we are doing nothing but paying lip service to integration.”

Nonetheless, most felt that the IFSD debate was “lively and productive.” One delegate emerging from the room noted that the Co-Chair engaged and challenged delegates to “think outside the box” on some of the key points. Discussions will continue on the periphery of the negotiations in efforts to achieve an “ambitious outcome” in Rio. Mexico and Indonesia are reportedly convening an informal meeting for interested parties early next week, and Switzerland is convening another meeting. Workshops on IFSD will also be held this weekend, with participation of Major Groups. Major Groups are also looking forward to a meeting with the Bureau Monday morning, which will include engagement with governments as well.