

UNCSD INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS: TUESDAY, 19 JUNE 2012

During a plenary meeting of the Pre-Conference Informal Consultations, delegates agreed to the outcome document *ad referendum*.

PLENARY

Brazilian Foreign Minister Antonio de Aguiar Patriota opened the mid-day plenary, informing waiting delegates that he believed they were in a position to adopt the text to be formally presented at the UNCSD (Rio+20) for adoption. He observed that, while not ideal, the text represents “the equilibrium” at this point.

The G-77/CHINA thanked the host country, saying the document agreed *ad referendum* is the “optimum outcome possible.” He encouraged delegates to adopt the document “without prejudging the right of all delegations to express their vision of the future we want.”

CHINA supported the statement and expressed appreciation to Brazil as host, and the flexibility shown by delegates. He noted concerns about trade measures and technology transfer. He stated that renegotiation is not recommended, and encouraged delegates to be proactive and constructive to “inject new life into the sustainable development agenda.”

BOLIVIA thanked Brazil for its efforts to build bridges. He underlined the importance of recognizing “Mother Earth,” the rights of nature, and recognition of different models of development in order avoid becoming prisoners of a monocultural model that has been called “green economy.” He emphasized: the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; promoting civil society participation in the process of developing SDGs; and technology transfer and finance. He noted MOI as “one of the main problems” in the text, stating that while developing countries’ responsibilities are increasing, developed countries’ responses are diminishing.

Republic of Congo, for the AFRICAN GROUP, expressed appreciation to Brazil for bringing delegates to consensus, highlighting the possibility of emerging from the process with a strong political declaration from Heads of State and Government. He supported the remarks of the G-77/CHINA, adding that Africa is still concerned about paragraph 88 on strengthening UNEP. He called on countries to “decide” to

strengthen and upgrade UNEP, rather than inviting UNGA to take certain actions, highlighting that the Rio conference is a forum of decision makers. On IFSD, he supported the outcome and commented that “the child hasn’t been given a name.” He called for a UN Environment Organization, noting the role of UNGA in future consultations. KENYA congratulated Brazil on its role and highlighted the need for MOI to ensure that the intentions of the conference can be implemented. He called for text on the environmental pillar in the context of sustainable development to be strengthened, noting that the large presence of member countries and Heads of State at Rio makes it a strong forum for global decision making.

CANADA expressed appreciation for Brazil’s leadership, underlining the challenges of negotiation where views vary widely. He encouraged delegates to look at the document as a whole as well as its parts. He noted a “balanced overall result,” and supported the text.

The ALLIANCE OF SMALL ISLAND STATES (AOSIS) noted the special significance of UNCED for recognition of the vulnerabilities of small islands, and said the real work lies in implementation of commitments and agreements. CUBA expressed disappointment on MOI and a dilution of developed country responsibilities. The US expressed disappointment at the absence of a reference to reproductive rights and the absence of priority themes for the SDGs. He stressed that the US position on UNEP presupposes that what appears in the document is what has been agreed, and this does not include reference to specialized agency or a change of name to a UN Environment Organization. He said there was no agreement to re-open this issue in the coming days.

The EU said she had worked to reach agreement on an ambitious outcome, to secure concrete action-oriented decisions giving clear direction. She said the document could have been better in a number of ways by including, for example, a reference to a UN Environment Organization.

VENEZUELA said Brazil had shown the world respectful leadership and the spirit of multilateralism, which brings a certain level of discomfort for everybody. She said she would have preferred more ambition on energy, oceans and the SDG process and, from developed countries, more ambition on MOI. She said the text lays the basis for a collective future, with agreement on an approach to the green economy that is far from



that which some had sought to impose. She said the concept has been re-appropriated by developing countries and now belongs to everyone. TURKEY noted that a reference to UNCLOS should not be interpreted as a change in his country's national position, and asked that this be recorded. On a paragraph on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, he noted, given the scope for different interpretations, that implementation should be construed as at the national level.

EGYPT congratulated the transparent and inclusive process and, on behalf of the ARAB GROUP, said the Group associated itself with the international consensus. He said the outcome reaffirms equity and CBDR as fundamental principles, and while the MOI section could have been better, it has the potential to deliver what the Group wants. He said the delicate balance in the outcome preserved multilateralism at a delicate moment, and all should stick to it and move on.

ARGENTINA thanked Brazil and said it appreciates the results of the Conference. JAPAN said that, in a spirit of compromise, his country can agree on the document and that it is ready to follow it with concrete actions, including on the MDG for eradication of poverty.

NORWAY supported the US on reproductive rights, which he said is crucial to gender equality and sustainable development. He supported Africa's ambition for creating a UN Environment Organization in the years to come and said his country will work to incorporate the voices of youth in a stronger way. He noted that the increase in inequality since the last Rio meeting has led to mistrust. MEXICO said that, in Rio+20, the social dimension has been incorporated into sustainable development, which is an important achievement.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES thanked Brazil for bringing countries to a balanced outcome, and welcomed its recognition of sustainable energy in line with national circumstances and the launch of SDGs. CHILE expressed deep appreciation for Brazil's leadership and the balanced document.

UNCSD Secretary-General Sha Zukang said he was pleased to join the host Government in announcing that negotiations have come to a successful conclusion, with a text that will be formally adopted with due respect for the sovereign rights of each country. He highlighted the inclusive manner in which Brazil led the consultations, and noted, among other elements: the agreement on a process to establish the SDGs; green economy; the high-level forum to follow-up on sustainable development; elements that will enhance the engagement of the private sector, which has been invited to make corporate sustainability reporting part of their responsibility; the beginning of a process to go beyond GDP to measure prosperity and wellbeing; establishment of a mechanism to ensure focus on MOI; reaffirmation of all past principles from Rio 1992, including CBDR, and human rights; adoption of the 10YFP on SCP; sectoral advances on energy and oceans; the registry of voluntary commitments; and emphasis on the role of CSOs and Major Groups. He thanked the host country, the city of Rio de Janeiro, CSOs, the PrepCom Bureau and Co-Chairs, and the Secretariat.

NIGERIA thanked Brazil for restoring faith in multilateral negotiations and for saving the incoming ministers from protracted negotiations. He said the outcome represents what the global community can achieve at this moment in time, and noted that "you build to what you want in stages," recalling that

it took 10 years for the GEF to be named a financial mechanism of the UNCCD. He said the document should not be re-opened, and that the mechanism for looking at MOI issues in the future is a good outcome. SAUDI ARABIA said the foundation for sustainable development was laid in Rio, and it was preserved here as well.

Minister Patriota said the pre-consultation for Rio+20 had thus concluded and the President of Brazil had been informed of the results that all had agreed to. He expressed thanks to the PrepCom Co-Chairs, the Secretariat, the UNCSD Secretary-General, and the Director of the Division of Sustainable Development, and said delegates had fulfilled their task in a way that prepares the arriving leaders for a successful summit. He said inclusion has been an important part of the process, and also highlighted that 500 official and 3000 nonofficial parallel events related to the UNCSD are taking place in Rio.

IN THE CORRIDORS

A palpable sense of relief filled the corridors Tuesday afternoon, as delegates exited the plenary room after agreeing to adopt the 49-page document, *ad referendum*, to be presented to Ministers and Heads of State and Government at the Rio+20 Conference. As the host country facilitators basked in near universal praise for their heroic efforts – resulting in the adoption of a text that, just a few days earlier, had only a minority of its content approved – relief, for many, was tinged with disappointment. While several delegates commented that this outcome document represented the best possible balance of options that could be achieved, on many issues it was felt that Rio+20 was fast becoming a missed opportunity for "The Future We Want." As one group of countries noted at a hastily convened press conference after the early morning plenary, "Time never met us. We really think that 50,000 people came together here to do something that would change the world."

"We have postponed the decisions," said one country delegate. "I don't think we have really something to be proud of." Those who saw the outcome as a glass half-full pointed out that the text on MOI, strengthening of UNEP and SDGs were designated as processes to be sorted out in the coming years. Briefings for the press and by Major Groups followed immediately afterward, and reflected confusion in some quarters about the legitimacy and organization of the process. Women, trade unions and others said they were particularly disappointed in the late disappearance of reference to "sexual and reproductive rights" from the text.

Many, however, appreciated the difficulties faced by the host country and their eventual success in rallying delegates around a document containing so many polarizing issues, and recognized that the results could have been "worse." "We were concerned this document would be Rio '92 minus," said one stakeholder. "What we have now is containment," with sustainable development "still at the top of the hierarchy" and green economy as part of this overarching framework. One high-level delegate emphasized: "We have a road map for governance and sustainable development, it is the moment to stress this convergence for the leaders tomorrow."