



# Earth Summit Bulletin

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## PREPCOM HIGHLIGHTS FRIDAY, 13 MARCH 1992

### SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND INTEGRATED LAND MANAGEMENT (WORKING GROUP I)

Working Group I met Friday morning to review "Promoting Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development" (SARD) (PC/100/Add.19). The discussion covered the first 14 of the 119 paragraphs. Most interventions focused on the major policy objectives for SARD. Argentina expressed concern about the impact of the deterioration of the ozone layer on agriculture. The United States introduced a paper with suggested changes tying sustainable agriculture development to "global free trade" and dropping references to overuse of chemical inputs and farmers' rights as compared to breeders' rights in biotechnology development. Equatorial Guinea, Finland, Cameroon, Zambia, Argentina and France all brought up the relationship of trade and environment policies in the context of sustainable agriculture. The Chair offered to take alternative text proposals and consolidate them for a Saturday meeting. Other additions included "protecting and enforcing property rights of women and indigenous peoples" (Norway) and "reviewing policies with respect to improving, harvesting, storage, processing, distribution and marketing of agricultural products at local, national and regional levels" (Portugal and Indonesia). These two additions were offered by NGO groups. An NGO response to the US position opposing some of the changes was circulated. The Chair scheduled an informal-informal session for Saturday,

In the afternoon, Working Group I considered "Integrated Approach to Planning and Management of Land Resources" (PC/100/Add.15). On behalf of the EC, Portugal offered that governments should "encourage the principle of delegating policy-making to the lowest appropriate level of authority (the principle of "subsidiarity"). Most of the discussion in this session concentrated on language concerning the cooperation and coordination of land management policy. The Philippines spoke for indigenous rights over land they occupy. Morocco brought up the extreme problems of land degradation, using the example of toxic chemicals and pesticides. There was also discussion of the need to provide land-users with the means of improving their land use practices (Zambia), encouraging the media to play a stronger role in raising awareness (Switzerland) and the exchange of information through networks (Portugal).

### OCEANS (WORKING GROUP II)

Working Group II finished its first reading of PC/100/Add.21 on Friday. As the last informal session on oceans came to a close, and as three contact groups still had a lot of work to do, it was apparent that additional sessions must be scheduled.

The working group finished discussions on Programme Areas F and G: "Strengthening international, including regional, cooperation and coordination" and "Sustainable development of islands." There was still disagreement on the need for Programme Area F and the Chair referred matters to yet another contact group.

Discussion on the sustainable development of islands was relatively non-controversial. The objective of this programme area is to adopt and implement sustainable development plans for islands, including the maintenance of biodiversity and the improvement in the quality of life for island peoples. Small island states, as expected, were particularly vocal on this programme area. Turkey proposed one potentially controversial amendment to the paragraph on "Basis for Action," stating that the activities related to the islands cannot restrict the rights of neighboring countries in adjacent seas. The Secretariat is expected to produce an amended version of this programme area over the weekend.

The working group then began reviewing the results of the contact group's discussions on coastal zone management (Programme Area A). Despite protests that the document was only

available in English, the group completed its review by the end of the afternoon. The document, as amended, should be tabled in all UN languages by Tuesday.

The contact group on marine environmental pollution met on Friday and continued to negotiate objectives for Programme Area B. Some progress was made, although the problem of how to incorporate the Nairobi recommendations on land-based sources of marine pollution (PC/113) with PC/100/Add.21 still remains. Some countries recommended replacing the objectives in Add.21 with the Nairobi text. However, others object since the Nairobi objectives only deal with land-based sources of marine pollution and Programme Area B deals with land and sea based sources.

## PREPCOM HIGHLIGHTS SATURDAY, 14 MARCH 1992

### HEALTH (PLENARY)

The work of the Plenary moved from Poverty to "Protection and Promotion of Human Health" (PC/100/Add.5) on Saturday. Portugal, on behalf of the European Community, began by saying that it was not prepared to discuss Add.5 and wanted to finalize work on the Poverty document (PC/100/Add.2.) India asked that copies of written submissions for amendments to Add.2 be circulated as soon as possible to facilitate discussion, which will continue on Wednesday. The Secretariat will circulate copies of the amendments today and will issue the compilation text tomorrow. Consensus was reached that work should proceed as planned on Add.5.

Adopting a strategy similar to that used for Add.2, the Chair proposed a first reading of Add.5 to flag difficulties and requested written submissions of amendments. The group moved through the introduction and proposed programme areas. Kenya noted that the scope of initiatives of health care systems, especially at the community level, should be broadened. There was discussion on the relationship between development and health. Australia will coordinate a Contact Group on paragraphs 2, 3 and 4, that will meet this afternoon. The first programme area, "Reducing Health Risks from Environmental Pollution and Hazards" was reviewed. Finland will coordinate the Contact Group to rewrite the section on activities (paragraph 7).

Progress was slowed by discussion on problematic wording common to all the Agenda 21 chapters. In general, these include phrases such as the use of "local" instead of "municipal" or clarification of responsibility in the assignment of activities to governments that have federal systems. Observers have noted that this could be avoided if a coordinated effort be made to draft a chapeau to Agenda 21 that would attend to these matters and speed up negotiations.

By the end of the session, the Plenary completed discussion on three of the five programme areas. The Holy See called for a holistic approach in "Meeting Basic Health Needs". In response, Australia proposed the words, "and access to safe and effective contraception," and later announced that it would meet with the Holy See to find wording that embraces both their comments.

### DESERTIFICATION (WORKING GROUP I)

Informal-informal discussions were held Saturday on combating desertification. A document was circulated for discussion that includes version "A," requesting the preparation and adoption of an International Convention to Combat Desertification particularly in Africa, and version "B" that proposes a new programme area for PC/100/Add.17 that would initiate an intergovernmental process to examine the most effective means and mechanisms to combat desertification. This initiative has met resistance from some developed countries although negotiations continue. African Group countries have said privately that they will insist on an

agreement here before moving to approve work on documents in preparation for signing at Rio.

**OCEANS (WORKING GROUP II)**

The contact group on living marine resources met on Saturday and began to discuss the basis for action in both programme areas C and D: "Sustainable use and conservation of high seas living resources" and "Sustainable use of living marine resources under national jurisdiction." There is still no agreement as to whether living marine resources should be covered in one or two programme areas. At the current pace, it does not appear likely that the contact group will finish its work by Tuesday, as the chair of Working Group II, Bukar Shaib, had hoped.

**EARTH CHARTER (WORKING GROUP III)**

Discussion of Earth Charter principles 16, 17 and 18 were held on Saturday. Principle 16 deals with the special situation of developing countries and recognizes that environmental protection is integral to the development process. Most of the delegates who made interventions held the opinion that consideration of the position of the South had been sufficiently covered in the first 15 principles. The US, Japan, New Zealand and the Russian Federation were all in favor of a more balanced and synthesized principle. The US specifically felt that language in the G-77 principle was too legalistic and would be more suitable for a convention than a statement of principles.

Principle 17 addresses the protection of the environment and natural resources of people under occupation. The US held the view that environmental degradation was found in other principles and consideration of this principle risked "injection of irrelevant political considerations" into the debate. Most delegations felt that UNCED was not the appropriate forum for this topic.

Principle 18 concerns the peaceful settlement of environmental disputes according to the UN Charter. Some delegations felt that this principle might be broadened to include language involving dispute prevention and settlement mechanisms. The Nordic countries raised concerns for the general development of international environmental law. Brazil recommended that prevention of "development disputes" also be considered.

The session concluded with proposals for additional paragraphs and a discussion of the nature of the preamble. The debate began with the question of whether the Earth Charter should be a chapeau or a prologue to Agenda 21, so that the two could be considered part of the same package.

**IN THE CORRIDORS**

During the past several days, both UN Secretary-General Boutros Ghali and UNCED Secretary-General Maurice Strong have hinted at possible changes in the role of the Trusteeship Council. It has been suggested that the Trusteeship Council be changed from a body dealing with the remnants of colonialism to one dealing with the environment. On Saturday, at an event in the Trusteeship Council Chambers, Strong obscurely called the choice of rooms coincidental. Look for movement around this idea. An NGO pundit wondered afterwards if he was planning to re-name it the Earth Chamber where the Earth Team, that make up the members of the Earth Council, would meet to take the Earth Pledge after the Earth Summit. Stay tuned for more Earth News.

**THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY AT PREPCOM**

**HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (PLENARY):** Of the seven programme areas in the Human Settlements paper (PC/100/Add.7), one of the most important is the implementation of the global strategy to provide adequate shelter by the year 2000 for the one billion people who are currently without adequate housing. Other key areas to watch for include: the involvement of local governments; confirmation of the human right to housing; sustainable local economic development; improvement in national and local capacities to deal with natural disasters; and the role of women.

**INTERNATIONAL ECONOMY (PLENARY):** The issue of Northern consumption patterns is very much at the heart of the macro-economic issues at stake here. Watch in particular for heated debate around demand management versus free market approaches to environmental protection; trade questions (in particular, the role of GATT in promoting unsustainable development) and governance of such international economic institutions as the World Bank, the IMF and GATT.

**FINANCIAL RESOURCES (PLENARY):** An informal-informal session will be held this morning where negotiations will begin on the G-77 text, L.41/Rev.1. Look for Vice-Chair John Bell to request that countries put their proposals down on paper in an ordered way so that real progress can be made. The debate has settled down to the following concerns and problems: the developed countries are looking to avoid a proliferation of mechanisms and bureaucracies, and hoping to avoid administrative difficulties by using those means that have a proven record; the developing countries want assurances of better governance in the administration of mechanisms, access to more resources and a broadening of the scope of activities eligible for funding. Agreement on these two sets of concerns is complicated by the lack of funds from shrinking Northern economies and the political problems that developed countries will have selling increased ODA levels at home.

**AGRICULTURE (WORKING GROUP I):** Although evening sessions have not yet been announced for this week, look for an informal session on PC/100/Add.19 tonight from 8:00 pm to 10:00 pm.

**OCEANS (WORKING GROUP II):** Though Working Group II will not hold any informal sessions today, three contact groups will meet. The contact group on marine environmental pollution will probably continue to discuss the integration of the Nairobi recommendations (PC/113) with PC/100/Add.21. The contact group on marine living resources will probably continue its discussion of the basis for action for the sustainable use of living marine resources under national jurisdiction. Finally, the contact group established to discuss institutional issues (Programme Area F) will likely discuss whether or not this programme area is necessary and, if so, begin negotiating specific language.

**EARTH CHARTER (WORKING GROUP III):** Once the first reading of the G-77 text (L.20) is complete, the next stage will involve a redrafting of the text to take into account all the amendments and proposals tabled by governments last week. Watch for OECD countries to request that the Chair play a role in the re-drafting. This is particularly critical due to the number of principles set out in the G-77 text that appear to lack consensus.

**THE BUREAU:** The Bureau will meet this morning and three announcements are expected: night meetings will begin immediately; the Conference has been postponed by two days and will now begin on 3 June and end on 14 June; and that the new coordinator for discussions on institutions in Working Group III will be the Permanent Representative to the UN from Egypt, Nabil Arabi.

**SCHEDULE OF PREPCOM IV EVENTS**

**OFFICIAL MEETINGS**

March 16	10:00 am	UN Conference Room 4	Plenary (human settlements)	Open
March 16	10:00 am and 3:00 pm	UN Conference Room 1	Working Group III	Open
March 16	3:00 pm	UN Conference Room 4	Plenary (international economy)	Open
March 16	8:00 pm	UN Conference Room 1	Working Group I (sustainable agriculture) To Be Confirmed	Open

**NGO AND OTHER MEETINGS**

March 16	9:00 am - 10:00 am	UN Conference Room C	NGO Strategy Session	NGOs
March 16	10:00 am - 11:00 am	CCUN 12th Fl. Press Center	Press Conference on the failure of UNCED to confront Transnational Corporations	Press
March 16	10:00 am - 11:00 am	UN Conference Room C	Women's Caucus	NGOs
March 16	12:00 pm - 1:00 pm	CCUN 12th Fl. Press Center	EDF Briefing on the Global Water Crisis	Open
March 16	1:30 pm - 2:30 pm	CCUN 2nd Floor	NGO Orientation	New NGOs
March 16	2:00 pm - 3:00 pm	CCUN 8th Fl. Grumman Room	NGO Strategy Meeting on Finance	NGOs
March 16	6:00 pm - 8:00 pm	UN Conference Room 4	NGO Gov't Dialogue and NGO Plenary "UNCED NGO Strategies"	NGOs