



**PREPCOM HIGHLIGHTS
TUESDAY EVENING, 17 MARCH 1992
OCEANS (WORKING GROUP II)**

Working Group II met Tuesday evening to discuss the amended Programme Areas E and G as contained in PC/WG.II/L.25. This was the last informal session scheduled for these two programme areas ("Addressing critical uncertainties for the management of marine environment and climate change" and "Sustainable development of small islands").

Much work was done to ensure that the document referred to "marine environment" and not "marine ecosystems", as originally written. Another substantial amendment was to ensure that the document referred to seas as well as oceans. Additional editorial changes were made.

Since the group's last session, specific references to ozone depletion and the effects of ultraviolet radiation on the marine environment have been included in the text. The US clearly stated that it will not endorse any areas dealing with the issue of ozone depletion. Argentina maintains strongly that this issue must be addressed in the oceans document. At the suggestion of the Chair, Bukar Shaib, the US and Argentina will meet to try to resolve their differences.

As a result of disagreements over the issues of ozone depletion and compensation, the working group did not have adequate time to address all parts of Programmes E and G. The Chair has formed another contact group to be chaired by Mexico. All additional amendments must be submitted by 3:00 pm today.

LEGAL INSTRUMENTS (WORKING GROUP III)

The negotiations on legal instruments came to an abrupt halt on Tuesday evening when Pakistan, representing the G-77, announced that the G-77 was preparing a package of amendments to the new working document, PC/WG.III/CRP.2. The G-77 package is apparently so comprehensive as to constitute a new or alternative draft.

The frustration of the delegates, at seeing what was heralded as a meaningful negotiating session flounder on procedural rocks, was palpable. The US said that the Group's work was "close to being hindered," and "We don't seem to be getting very far very fast." The Chair, saying he didn't wish to "further waste the UN's time and money," adjourned the meeting with a stern warning that all amendments must be submitted to the Secretariat no later than 5:00 pm Wednesday.

**PREPCOM HIGHLIGHTS
WEDNESDAY, 18 MARCH 1992**

POVERTY, HEALTH AND EDUCATION (PLENARY)

A brief formal session of the Plenary was held yesterday morning to receive statements by the Irish Environment Minister, Michael Smith and the Algerian Secretary of State for Scientific Research, Mourad Khelladi. As well, Roberto Smeraldi and Muriel Saragoussi from the Environmental Liaison Centre International summarized the major recommendations from the NGO Global Forum held in Paris last December.

The meeting was adjourned and transformed into an informal session to discuss PC/100/Add.5, "Protection and promotion of human health". The discussion that ensued involved mostly editorial changes to the working document. The most substantive change tabled was the addition of an objective under Programme Area D, "Control of Communicable Diseases": the cure of 85 per cent of cholera outbreaks by the year 2000.

Since the discussion of the document proceeded slowly, several countries urged that an expedited review process be imple-

mented. It was agreed that the US would coordinate a contact group for this topic. The Vice-Chair called for any additional proposals and amendments to be submitted directly to the contact group so that a new compilation text could be prepared. The next informal meeting of this group will be held on Friday.

INTERNATIONAL ECONOMY (PLENARY)

The discussion on international economic conditions resumed in the Plenary yesterday afternoon. The Vice-Chair, Ahmed Djoghlaif from Algeria, emphasized at the outset the need to complete work on PC/100/Add.3 at this session and urged delegations to submit their proposals for text amendments in writing by noon today to avoid comments in the Plenary on such amendments. Nevertheless, the debate made slow progress, paragraph-by-paragraph, as delegates proceeded to proposed detailed text changes. It was possible to complete the review of the document, as planned, during the session, but only because the EC, Japan and the US deferred all references to "increased ODA flows" to the working group on financial resources. The resulting text is heavily bracketed and will require considerable additional work.

Switzerland pointed out that the entire document should better reflect discussions in other UN processes, notably UNCTAD, and that the principle of non-discriminatory and more liberalized trade should be established at the outset. The EC, Switzerland and Mexico stated that environmental policies and trade policies should be made more mutually supportive, in which case they would contribute to sustainable development. India, supported by China, said that environmental standards in developed countries could have high economic and social costs in developing countries. Kenya raised the issue of trade in endangered species, but was not supported.

On behalf of the EC, Portugal confirmed that there is no timetable for reaching the UN target of 0.7 percent of GNP for ODA. The US restated its resistance to both targets and timetables for ODA. There was discussion about references in the text to policy reforms in developed countries, which the EC, the US and Japan wanted deleted, but which India, Kenya and China, wanted, arguing that "the problem is not only ours."

FORESTS (WORKING GROUP I)

Working Group I began discussion yesterday on the Forest chapter of Agenda 21 (PC/100/Add.16). Following the ground rules established during debate on other chapters, the sections entitled "Introduction", "Basis for action" and "Means of implementation" were passed over for debate later in the session. Malaysia, on behalf of the G-77, began the day by announcing that it would soon have copies of the G-77's proposed amendments. Chair Bo Kjellén directed the delegates to begin with paragraph 5, which contains the names of the programme areas.

Debate moved very slowly and it was evident early in the day that the methodology proposed by the Chair would not allow the group to dispose of the text in the two sessions allotted to this document. The delay was exacerbated by the fact that neither the EC nor the G-77 had provided copies of their amendments to the delegates at the outset (although these did arrive during the session.) Malaysia, for the G-77, introduced five new programme areas into the list of names and tabled their 256 textual changes to Add.16. By the end of the second hour the working group had proposed new amendments to four paragraphs, which prompted Kjellén to say, "I have to push this working group."

There was extensive discussion over the choice of words used to describe the systems to be managed in the first programme area: either "forests and forest lands," "forest resources" or "forest ecosystems." The text was left in brackets for further discussion.

Specific problems emerged over the wording of the chapeau for paragraph 9, the management-related activities for Programme Area A, "Securing the multiple role of forests". A small

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group of interested countries met over lunch with the Chair and the Secretariat to resolve problems here.

The afternoon session began with Kjellén's proposal of a change in procedure. In order to avoid detailed drafting on every item, he encouraged the delegates to highlight only important points not covered in written submissions. He also announced that the Secretariat would be working with him to re-draft a consolidated text, taking into consideration all the proposals. This document would be considered on Friday night at 8:00 pm. Discussion proceeded paragraph-by-paragraph with oral submissions of amendments.

Before Kjellén closed the day's session, he announced that the Secretariat will look at today's proposals and integrate them into the text, where possible. By the close of the meeting, copies of the compilation draft of Forest Principles were circulated to delegates.

IN THE CORRIDORS

As PrepCom IV cleared the half-way point yesterday, talk in the corridors pertained to the lack of real progress made in the preparation of texts to be taken to Rio: a mere two-and-a-half months and thirteen negotiating days away. Some observers said that real methodological changes will have to be made in the way the negotiating sessions are handling their documents. Others thought that PrepCom Chair Tommy Koh should call an extraordinary Plenary session to exhort delegates to expedite negotiations. Some have observed that the apparent deadlocks around such issues as finance, the Earth Charter and oceans signal the extent to which the PrepCom is finally dealing with substance, taking on the tough work passed from PrepCom II to PrepCom III and on to PrepCom IV. This deadlock also reflects the fact that delegates are now "showing their hands" in a way that brings them into clear conflict over the key issues. These problems are compounded by the bottlenecks at the level of the Secretariat that lacks the resources to cope with the workload; and the G-77 that is "stretched thin" trying to draft text and respond to amendments in so many different fora.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY AT PREPCOM

BIODIVERSITY (WORKING GROUP I): Discussions begin today on PC/100/Add.20, the Agenda 21 chapter on biodiversity. Several governments have privately expressed the view that the text does not provide an adequate basis for negotiations and several of them have taken the initiative to draft a simplified version. Discussions today may focus not on Add.20 but, instead, on the appropriateness of debate on biodiversity within PrepCom since the INC negotiations are underway in a parallel negotiating track. Some feel that there is no conflict, since the INC is working on a legally binding text and Agenda 21 focuses on action proposals. NGOs are concerned that the new proposals may omit references to major groups, such as women and farmers, in order to accelerate negotiations by avoiding conflict areas.

BIOTECHNOLOGY (WORKING GROUP I): Working Group I takes up the issue of biotechnology today in the afternoon session. PC/100/Add.27 places considerable emphasis on the benefits of biotechnology, but there are also several paragraphs for bio-safety regulation for biotechnology. The document has been criticized for being too optimistic, although some countries feel that it is overly cautious with respect to the risks of biotechnology. Look for the US to attempt to amend the document's references to biotechnology safety measures. This would create an imbalance between the intentions of the documents to promote the environmentally sound application of biotechnology whilst ensuring that the technologies do not pose unacceptable new risks. Watch for the G-77 to propose the merging of the biotechnology and biodiversity texts.

HAZARDOUS WASTE (WORKING GROUP II): Discussion of PC/100/Add.24, "Environmentally Sound Management of Hazardous Wastes", will commence in Working Group II this morning. During the discussion of the G-77 Earth Charter principle that proposes the banning of transboundary movement of hazardous waste, industrialized countries stated that this level of specificity was inappropriate for the Earth Charter, particularly because it was the topic of a separate Agenda 21 chapter. The question now is whether those same industrialized countries will approve language in Add.24 that would effectively ban the dumping of hazardous wastes in developing countries. The US has been consistently opposed to any international ban, while most African countries strongly support it. Look for heated discussion over the prevention of hazardous waste through "cleaner production" methods and whether recycling is an appropriate method within this context.

SOLID WASTE (WORKING GROUP II): This afternoon, Working Group II will discuss PC/100/Add.25, "Environmentally Sound Management of Solid Wastes and Sewage-Related Issues." This is the least controversial of the four documents dealing with waste issues and the discussion is likely to be low-key. Possible areas of contention include: the establishment of target dates within the programme areas and the export of solid waste to third countries or areas which are not subject to state sovereignty.

LEGAL INSTRUMENTS AND INSTITUTIONS (WORKING GROUP III): When Working Group III reconvenes on Thursday night, it will do so under great pressure to produce tangible products. Both legal instruments and institutions will have to be addressed in the one session if the Group is to return to its top priority, the Earth Charter, for its final meetings on Friday and Saturday. Regarding institutions, it appears that the G-77 has only been able to forge a common position on the generalities. Watch for proposals to be tabled around more specific matters pertaining to the type and nature of the various proposals for a high-level coordinating body. Watch for the current "no new institutions" dictum to possibly dissipate over the course of the week. Also look for continuing heated discussion over the controversial G-77 package of amendments to the instruments working document, CRP.2.

SCHEDULE OF PREPCOM IV EVENTS

OFFICIAL MEETINGS

March 19	10:00 am	UN Conference Room 1	Working Group I (Biodiversity)	Open
March 19	10:00 am	UN Conference Room 4	Working Group II (Radioactive Waste)	Open
March 19	3:00 pm	UN Conference Room 1	Working Group I (Biotechnology)	Open
March 19	3:00 pm	UN Conference Room 4	Working Group II (Solid Waste)	Open
March 19	8:00 pm	UN Conference Room 4	Plenary (Transfer of Technology)	Open
March 19	8:00 pm	UN Conference Room 1	Working Group III (Legal & Institutional Matters)	Open

NGO AND OTHER MEETINGS

March 19	8:00 am - 9:00 am	UN Conference Room B	Indigenous People's Briefing	Indigenous People's NGOs
March 19	9:00 am - 10:00 am	UN Conference Room 1	NGO Strategy Session	NGOs
March 19	10:00 am - 11:00 am	UN Conference Room C	Women's Caucus	NGOs
March 19	10:00 am - 12:00 pm	UN Conference Room B	IUCN Briefing on UNCED Issues	NGOs
March 19	1:00 pm	25 Tudor Place Apt.# 1820	Strategy Session for Canadian NGOs	Canadian NGOs
March 19	1:15 pm - 2:45 pm	CCUN 8th Floor Boss Room	Women and Agenda 21	NGOs
March 19	1:30 pm - 2:30 pm	CCUN 2nd Floor Hospitality Center	NGO Orientation	New NGOs
March 19	2:00 pm - 3:00 pm	UNIFEM Bldg. Conf. Room on 6th Floor	NGO Working Group on Forests	NGOs
March 19	3:00 pm - 5:00 pm	UN Conference Room C	IIED and Action Aid Workshop on Local Level Sustainability in Agenda 21	NGOs
March 19	6:00 pm - 8:00 pm	UN Conference Room 2	NGO Government Dialogue & NGO Plenary "Forests"	Open