



**PREPCOM HIGHLIGHTS
WEDNESDAY EVENING, 18 MARCH**

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER (PLENARY)

Wednesday evening's session on technology transfer began on a "note of urgency, even crisis", as the Vice-Chair appealed to delegates to develop an "innovative negotiating process" to deal with a "non-manageable negotiating document." The working document, a compilation of overlapping positions and amendments, required "cleaning up and streamlining" before substantive negotiations could begin. The entire meeting was devoted to the search for an appropriate procedure.

The US ultimately offered its proposed restructuring that was generally accepted because it would greatly facilitate negotiations. The US proposed outline includes four activity areas: information networks; access and transfer; capacity building; and collaborative arrangements and partnerships.

It was thought that the next session should be held in a smaller room to facilitate face-to-face negotiation and, thus, speed up the work.

RADIOACTIVE WASTES (WORKING GROUP II)

Working Group II met Wednesday evening to discuss PC/100/Add.4, "safe and environmentally sound management of radioactive wastes". The US and Japan made it clear that there was no consensus to include radioactive wastes in Agenda 21. Many countries expressed their support for already existing bodies, such as the International Atomic Energy Agency and the London Dumping Convention. It was quickly pointed out, however, that these bodies do not include many of the Southern countries present at UNCED. Support for regional treaties, such as the Bamako Convention, was also expressed.

The discussion strayed to paragraph 4 where there was much contention about the role of developing countries. Many Southern countries made pleas for the funds and technology to deal effectively with radioactive waste. Some went on to suggest that those who create the waste should dispose of it at the source.

Sweden, supported by Australia, suggested the inclusion of references that military radioactive waste be subject to stringent regulations. In a formal session convened after the informal, Greenpeace, youth and the NGO working group on militarism and the environment called for a permanent ban on ocean dumping.

There appear to be four substantive issues at stake here: 1) should the radioactive subject matter be included in Agenda 21; 2) should radioactive waste be subject to only national jurisdiction; 3) should military radioactive waste be included; and 4) should ocean dumping of radioactive waste be included.

A contact group will address these issues when it meets on Saturday.

**PREPCOM HIGHLIGHTS
THURSDAY, 19 MARCH 1992**

BIODIVERSITY AND BIOTECHNOLOGY (WORKING GROUP I)

Working Group I began discussions yesterday on the Agenda 21 chapters related to the conservation of biological diversity and environmentally sound management of biotechnology. Vicente Sanchez of Chile, the Chair of the International Negotiating Committee for a biodiversity convention, addressed the delegates, presenting a list of what has been resolved and those issues outstanding in the independent negotiating track.

The Swedish delegation presented a "simplified and streamlined" paper as a possible new negotiating text, calling it an at-

tempt to assist in drafting an Agenda 21 chapter that will not prejudice the Biodiversity Convention negotiations in any way. The G-77 supported the Swedish suggestion that the text provide a "new point of departure." Portugal, on behalf of the EC, proposed its own paper as a new text although there were no copies available at that time, making discussion of its merits difficult for the group. The US, citing possible delays in the negotiations on the convention, wanted to begin discussions on the Secretariat document. Chair Kjellén adjourned the meeting to allow time for the EC document to arrive.

During the break, a "scrum" of government delegates shifted first from around the US seat, where an attempt was made to convince the US to drop objections to the Swedish text, to a nearby space between tables, where the G-77 met with Kjellén. Action shifted back to the US desk and it appeared to observers that a deal had been struck. In the interim the EC text arrived. It was as short as the new Swedish draft except that it proposed putting Add.20 in as an annex for information purposes. Kjellén called the meeting back to order and announced that an agreement had been reached that would attempt to avoid preempting the ongoing biodiversity negotiations and to avoid discussion on the voluminous Add.20 document. He proposed that both the Swedish and the EC documents be taken into consideration together. Debate then moved to combining the objectives from both texts. Few controversies emerged since the governments avoided discussion of any issues still under negotiation in the INC.

In the afternoon Kjellén returned to the discussion of biodiversity, finishing the list of objectives of the chapter. Brazil proposed a new objective to protect and enhance traditional methods and knowledge of local communities and indigenous populations. As there was no time to discuss the activities, the Chair announced that he would work with the Secretariat to create a compilation document and that the countries that had made proposals, along with representatives from the regional groups, would meet in a small group this afternoon.

Kjellén then moved on to Biotechnology. The G-77, EC, the US, CANZ and Finland proposed amendments to the text, PC/100/Add.27. He announced that he would try and speed up the work of the group by moving directly to the objectives of the five programme areas and leave discussions on the "basis for action", "activities", and "means of implementation" until later. The pace of work left many delegations confused about the status of the other paragraphs and the direction the group would take after this meeting. This was complicated by the fact that the US was working from an old version of Add.27 with different paragraph numbers. The working group finished discussing the objectives within the time allotted. Kjellén announced that these two issues would be scheduled for Monday night. Between now and then the Chair will work with the Secretariat to produce a consolidated document.

HAZARDOUS WASTES (WORKING GROUP II)

Discussion of PC/100/Add.24, "Environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes," began yesterday morning in Working Group II. With the skilled guidance of the Dutch Vice-Chair, Joke Waller-Hunter, the group completed its first reading of the document.

Portugal, on behalf of the EC, said that the Basel Convention should form the basis of the document and that hazardous wastes should not be exported to countries banning its import. Canada, on the other hand, stated that there was too much of an emphasis on bans and the document should include mention of exporting hazardous waste for recycling purposes.

The discussion on Programme Area A (which deals with promoting waste prevention and minimization through "cleaner production" methods) focussed on the three paragraphs that contain brackets. While most countries supported the deletion of these brackets, the US and Canada continued to object to text referring

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to the establishment of targets for phasing out banned or severely restricted chemicals (paragraph 13(e)), since this should be included in the chapter on toxic chemicals, not hazardous wastes. In Programme Area B on promoting and strengthening institutional capacities in hazardous waste management, there was only one set of brackets. Since this dealt with finance, the Vice-Chair hoped that further discussion could be postponed until after the Plenary's discussion of finance. Nevertheless, a number of countries requested the floor. Sweden proposed a new activity in paragraph 24 which would require governments to ascertain that the military submit to environmental norms in its treatment of hazardous waste.

Programme Area C on the transboundary movements of hazardous waste contained the most bracketed text and generated the most comments. Poland called for the prohibition of transboundary movements of hazardous waste from OECD to non-OECD nations and for the employment of cleaner technology to avoid the creation of such waste. Many developing countries, including Colombia, supported this position. The African countries stressed that this ban should be consistent with the Bamako Convention. The US prefers the terminology used in the Basel Convention.

At the close of the session, Venezuela said that this chapter does not mention illegal traffic of hazardous waste. A number of countries supported Venezuela, which will draft appropriate language.

SOLID WASTES (WORKING GROUP II)

Working Group II's afternoon session was spent discussing PC/100/Add.25, "Environmentally sound management of solid wastes and sewage-related issues." Like the other waste-related documents, the amount of progress made at PrepCom III greatly contributed to the efficient initial reading of the document at issue. The discussion focused on text that was bracketed in Geneva. One of the common themes repeated throughout the afternoon was the fact that countries should set their own targets and not be forced to comply with internationally-set targets. Colombia, Ethiopia and Mexico stressed that targets should be based on each country's economic and technical capabilities.

With regard to recycling, Austria proposed that the terminology "reuse and recycle" should appear consistently throughout the document. Libya commented that not all states can recycle since the cost of recycling is very high and this could be a burden on developing countries. It is likely that the revised language on recycling will reflect each country's capabilities.

Nigeria stated that the issue of medical waste should be mentioned and that it would propose appropriate text. Belgium and Mexico stressed that greater attention must be given to research and technology development.

All amendments must be submitted in writing by 6:00 pm today. A contact group will meet on this subject on Tuesday. It appears likely that the contact group will be able to reach consensus quickly on the remaining bracketed text.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY AT PREPCOM

POVERTY, HEALTH AND EDUCATION (PLENARY): The Plenary will complete its discussion this morning on PC/100/Add.5, "Health and the environment," and then move on to PC/100/Add.6, "Education, training and public awareness".

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER (PLENARY): The Plenary will continue to discuss technology transfer this evening. This group will continue to meet in a more intimate setting to encourage face-to-face negotiation on the compilation document. It appears that the US's proposed outline has been accepted and negotiation is proceeding on the basis of this document.

FORESTS (WORKING GROUP I): There are three meetings on forests scheduled today and tomorrow. A meeting of the Ad Hoc Sub-Group on Forests will convene this morning to begin work on the new compilation document on forest principles that attempt to reflect the results of the discussions held on Tuesday and the informal consultations. The Vice-Chair will try to move the negotiators from matters of procedure to substance. The parties have indicated a genuine desire to complete the text in time for Rio. They may, however, be limited by the short amount of time allotted. The delegates will possibly agree to disagree on the financial aspects and the matter of preparations for subsequent legal instruments -- leaving these passages bracketed for further negotiations at UNCED. A further informal-informal meeting will be held on Saturday morning.

This evening Working Group I will review PC/100/Add.16, the Agenda 21 proposals on forests. The Secretariat has been working on a compilation document, based on the amendments proposed on Wednesday.

WORKING GROUP II: The oceans informal session originally scheduled for today has been cancelled since the contact groups have not finished their work. Instead, Working Group II will hold a series of contact groups throughout the day. With regard to oceans, the contact group on living marine resources will meet this morning and the contact group on strengthening international institutions will meet in the afternoon. The contact group on toxic chemicals is scheduled to hold its first meeting this morning and will continue meeting in the afternoon. Finally, the contact group on freshwater resources will meet in the evening.

EARTH CHARTER (WORKING GROUP III): Working Group III will resume discussions on the Earth Charter today. At issue, once again, is the choice of the text that will form the basis for negotiations. The G-77's revised text, "the approach paper," drew significant criticism from OECD countries that maintain that the text is too detailed, too accusatory and far too politicized a document. There are two possible process options. The first would involve the Chair setting up a contact group to prepare a compilation document to serve as the basis for negotiations. This option would presumably use the G-77 text as a starting point. But as a compromise to the OECD countries, the contact group would, in fact, be chaired by one of its members. The second option would involve a second reading of the G-77 text in an informal session with the Chair to preparing the compilation document on the basis of government input tabled at that meeting.

SCHEDULE OF PREPCOM IV EVENTS

OFFICIAL MEETINGS

March 20	10:00 am	UN Conference Room 1	Working Group I (Forests)	Closed
March 20	10:00 am	UN Conference Room 4	Plenary (Poverty Health and Education)	Open
March 20	3:00 pm	UN Conference Room 4	Plenary (Data & Information)	Open
March 20	3:00 pm	UN Conference Room 1	Working Group III (Earth Charter)	Open
March 20	8:00 pm	UN Conference Room 1	Working Group I (Forests)	Open
March 20	8:00 pm	UN Conference Room 6	Plenary (Technology Transfer)	TBC
March 21	10:00 am	UN Conference Room 4	Plenary (Integrating environment in decision-making)	Open
March 21	10:00 am	UN Conference Room 1	Working Group III (Earth Charter)	Open

NGO AND OTHER MEETINGS

March 20	8:00 am - 9:00 am	UN Conference Room B	Indigenous People's Briefing	NGOs
March 20	9:00 am - 10:00 am	UN Conference Room 1	NGO Strategy Session	NGOs
March 20	10:00 am - 11:00 am	UN Conference Room C	Women's Caucus	NGOs
March 20	11:30 am - 12:30 pm	UN Conference Room B	NGO Meeting with Nancy Carter and the US Delegation	NGOs
March 20	1:00 pm - 2:00 pm	CCUN 10th Floor Conf. Room 10H	NGO Working Group on Forests	NGOs
March 20	2:00 pm - 4:00 pm	CCUN 10th Floor Conf. Room 10H	Biodiversity & Biotechnology Working Group	Open
March 20	2:00 pm - 4:30 pm	CCUN 8th Floor Gramman Room	NGO Working Group on Finance	NGOs
March 20	6:00 pm - 8:30 pm	UN Conference Room 2	NGO Government Dialogue & NGO Plenary "Women, Environment & the Politics of Reproduction"	NGOs
March 21	1:00 pm - 2:00 pm	CCUN 11th Floor Hardin Room	Earth Parliament for Traditional Peoples	Open