



PREPCOM HIGHLIGHTS THURSDAY EVENING, 19 MARCH 1992

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER (PLENARY): The Plenary met in a closed informal-informal session Thursday night to continue its discussion of technology transfer. The Vice-Chair, Bjornar Utheim, presented the delegates with a reordered compilation document that was prepared according to the outline proposed by the US the night before. After spending time on procedural matters, the group tackled the document's title. There was still disagreement over the US's proposal: "Cooperation for the transfer, adaptation and diffusion of environmentally sound technology." India proposed a compromise, using the language that had been agreed upon by the climate change negotiators, however, the rest of the G-77 rejected this as being inconsistent with the wording in Resolution 44/228. The group decided to leave the title in brackets and move on to "Basis for Action." Although the discussion did not proceed much further, some participants are optimistic that they will reach consensus on this document with a minimum of problems as both sides seem willing to compromise.

INSTITUTIONS/LEGAL INSTRUMENTS (WORKING GROUP III): Working Group III met on Thursday night to discuss both institutions and legal instruments. The first half of the session was devoted to statements on institutions, where countries addressed possible fora for policy making; implementation of Agenda 21 and coordination of governments and agencies in the implementation process. Iran, Egypt and China spoke in favor of the G-77 report calling for the UN General Assembly to remain the sole forum for policy making; ECOSOC to be the appropriate forum to oversee inter-agency coordination; as well as the strengthening of existing agencies, especially UNEP. A number of countries, including the Netherlands, stressed that follow-up is critical and UN institutions should aim at integrating environment and development. Canada stressed the important role that governments and NGOs will play in the implementation of Agenda 21.

The second half of the meeting was devoted to an informal session on legal instruments. Two new documents were examined: CRP.2/Rev.1, a draft summary of discussions to date, and L.30, a draft decision prepared by the G-77 and China. Substantive discussion on the convergence of the two documents did not begin due to a procedural deadlock. Pakistan, on behalf of the G-77, wanted initial discussions to focus on the introduction to L.30. The US and the EC called for initial discussions to focus on the basis for action as set out in CRP.2/Rev.1. They argued that this document represents the summary of all discussions to date. The delegates were unable to resolve this procedural debacle.

PREPCOM HIGHLIGHTS FRIDAY, 20 MARCH 1992

POVERTY, HEALTH AND EDUCATION (PLENARY): The Plenary met Friday morning to continue its discussion of the poverty cluster. Frank Young, the US coordinator for the contact group on health (PC/100/Add.5), reported that consultations had been held, comments received, and that they were ready to submit a report, without brackets. The EC thanked the US delegate for his work and the Vice-Chair said that other contact groups should emulate their example. The US circulated copies of the document for additional comments and suggested that it would be ready for translation later that day.

Sweden accepted responsibility for coordination of a contact group for the education document (PC/100/Add.6). A contact group on poverty (PC/100/Add.2) was also created with Australia as coordinator. The meeting ended early and the evening session was cancelled so that the various contact groups might meet.

INFORMATION FOR DECISION MAKING (PLENARY): The Plenary began discussion of PC/100/Add.12,

"Information for decision making," Friday afternoon. This chapter of Agenda 21, which addresses the key issues of collecting and using information for sustainable development and monitoring the implementation of Agenda 21, is being discussed for the first time in the preparatory process.

Although PrepCom Chair Tommy Koh had hoped that this document could be discussed and agreed upon in one afternoon, this was not the case. After having completed only 9 paragraphs by 6:00 pm, Koh announced that the group would continue its discussion at 8:00 pm in the time-slot vacated by the working group on poverty, health and education.

One of the major issues was access to information and the role of government. China objected to the reference in paragraph 2 that everyone is a decision maker for sustainable development, implying that decisions can only be taken by government.

In Programme Area A, "Bridging the data gap", Ethiopia argued that some information is classified according to importance and sensitivity. The issue of national sovereignty over information was mentioned by China and Brazil. The US insisted on bracketing paragraphs dealing with finance (13 and 14). This brought a sharp rebuke from China, asking what the point of these discussions was if there was no commitment to finance the points agreed upon. By 10:00 pm the group had only reached paragraph 20 and agreed to reconvene in the morning.

FORESTS (WORKING GROUP I): Working Group I met on Friday morning to resume work on Forest Principles, CRP.14/Rev.2. The amendments submitted during Tuesday morning's session emerged as a 54-page compilation document. What was expected to be a relatively noncontroversial negotiating session turned into a difficult one involving procedural wrangling. Vice-Chair Charles Liburd suggested that the deliberations focus on the consolidation, restructuring and negotiation of the text.

Work began on the preamble and progressed slowly as problematic areas appeared over use of the word "range" or "gamut", as well as in references to deferring the decision for a subsequent, post-UNCED deliberation on an international, legally binding instrument on forests. It seemed to many delegates that several developing country negotiators were rather rigid in their positions and that the mood of the negotiations was polarizing along North-South lines.

Negotiations resumed Friday night on the Agenda 21 chapter for Forests, PC/100/Add.16. A new consolidated text was distributed. This document had been prepared by the Chair and the Secretariat, based on the negotiations held Tuesday and including many of the amendments submitted at that session.

Chair Bo Kjellén was determined to move through the entire document during one session, regardless of the time allotted or availability of interpreters. Negotiations moved quickly, as the Chair passed over sections on "means of implementation" and "basis for action", leaving discussion only on "objectives" and "activities". The interpreters left at 10:10 pm. Kjellén pleaded with the delegates to focus on the ideas and leave the minor editing points to the Secretariat. No major problem areas emerged and the group was able to complete its second reading of PC/100/Add.16. by 11:20 pm. The Secretariat and the Chair will now work to resolve minor problems in the text before Working Group I looks at this document for the final time later this week.

FRESHWATER (WORKING GROUP II): The contact group working on the freshwater resources chapter of Agenda 21 (PC/100/Add.22) reached consensus on most issues on Friday night. The group was unable to agree on shared water resources and established a sub-contact group to handle this issue. Working Group II is expected to review the contact group's work later this week.

LEGAL INSTRUMENTS (WORKING GROUP III): Working Group III met on Friday to decide on a course of action for negotiations on legal instruments. The G-77, insisted that its draft decision, L.30, be used as the basis for negotiations. After a

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brief procedural debate, Chair Bedrich Moldan ruled, based on a suggestion by Pakistan, that amendments to L.30 could be tabled until Saturday at 1:00 pm. Thereafter, the Secretariat would compile these amendments into a text to be referred to as CRP.2/Rev 2. This text is expected to be ready for delegates today or tomorrow.

EARTH CHARTER (WORKING GROUP III): On Friday Working Group III also addressed the course of procedure for negotiations on the Earth Charter. The Chair, Bedrich Moldan, announced that he would enforce the Friday 6:00 pm deadline for amendments. Numerous delegations expressed their concern with the tight deadline but supported the Chair in his ruling. The amendments to L.20/Rev.1 will be compiled by the Secretariat into a non-paper. This compilation text will henceforth serve as the basis for negotiations. This decision was considered by many to break through the procedural deadlock that has mired Earth Charter discussions to date. It was particularly important from the perspective of OECD countries since negotiations will no longer revolve exclusively around the G-77 text.

PREPCOM HIGHLIGHTS SATURDAY, 21 MARCH 1992

INFORMATION FOR DECISION MAKING (PLENARY): The Plenary completed discussion of PC/100/Add.12 on Saturday morning. The group slowly worked its way through the remaining 11 paragraphs in Programme Area B, "Improving Access to Information". The underlying factor that pervaded many of the interventions was concern about national sovereignty. The Russian Federation wanted to ensure that the document did not focus solely on improving developing countries' access to information, but all countries' access.

The group finished its discussions at 12:30 pm, after nearly 8 hours of discussion. The only brackets in the document are on the paragraphs that deal with finance (paragraphs 13, 14 and 28). The Plenary has not begun work on PC/100/Add.8, "Integration of environment and development in decision-making". The negotiating session on this document is being rescheduled.

FORESTS (WORKING GROUP I): Working Group I met all day Saturday to continue negotiations on the Forest Principles. After a halting start, due to procedural problems over interpretation, the pace of negotiations remained slow. Only modest progress was made and now, after three negotiating sessions, only the preamble and two of the seventeen principles have been partially discussed. Observers have noted that several developing country negotiators seem to be hardening their positions in these discussions in an attempt to gain leverage in the negotiations on transfer of technology and financial resources.

EARTH CHARTER (WORKING GROUP III): Working Group III met in a closed informal-informal session on Saturday to commence negotiations on the Secretariat's non-paper, a compilation of proposed amendments to L.20/Rev.1. At the suggestion of the G-77, discussion revolved around those elements of the compilation text that may be ripe for consensus. There was also discussion on the preambular reference to the state of poverty in which many people in developing countries live. While there was general agreement that poverty had to be addressed in the Earth Charter, there were differences as to how it should be

dealt with in the text. Many delegations identified the key elements that they wanted to be addressed in the preamble. It was decided that the G-77 would meet at 2:00 pm to draft text. The full group reconvened at 3:00 pm to carry on the discussions on the preamble and the poverty section.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY AT PREPCOM

ROLE OF MAJOR GROUPS (PLENARY): The Plenary will convene this afternoon to discuss PC/100/Add.13, "Strengthening the role of major groups." Several governments are preparing substantive inputs, including the addition of children to the youth section, and a new section on the elderly. The Vice-Chair, Ambassador Mazairac, has indicated that he does not want a procedural debate. This session is scheduled to begin as a formal one to allow interventions by representatives of the major groups.

TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY (PLENARY): Discussion will continue on the revised compilation document on technology transfer this evening. At its meeting Thursday night, the group left off discussing the basis for action. It is likely that discussion will pick up here this evening as the group continues its paragraph-by-paragraph review of the document.

ATMOSPHERE (WORKING GROUP I): Working Group I will move to its last outstanding agenda item, PC/100/Add.14, Atmosphere. This document has been re-written after last PrepCom criticized it for over-emphasis on energy concerns. Numerous countries, including the G-77, have prepared their own text as an alternative to Add.14. The primary area of contention is the perceived extent to which Add.14, and especially the energy section, are duplicative of the work of the parallel climate change negotiations. Expect the usual procedural quagmire over text selection to dominate the first session.

BIODIVERSITY (WORKING GROUP I): A contact group on biodiversity has met to look at the Swedish and EC texts as well as the original document, PC/100/Add.20. Although no consensus was reached there was broad agreement and the Chair, with the help of the Secretariat, will probably produce a convergence document.

OCEANS (WORKING GROUP II): Working Group II will reconvene this morning to discuss oceans. The contact group on marine pollution (Programme Area B) completed its work last Thursday and the institutional contact group (Programme Area F) reached consensus on Friday. This morning, the group is expected to review the results of these two contact groups and complete its consideration of sustainable development of small islands (Programme Area G). The contact group on marine living resources (Programme Areas C and D) continues to meet behind closed doors.

EARTH CHARTER (WORKING GROUP III): Working Group III Chair Bedrich Moldan will be meeting with interested parties today at 10:00 am on the Earth Charter. The next closed session on the Earth Charter will be convened this afternoon. It is expected that negotiations will continue around less controversial elements of the compilation text.

SCHEDULE OF PREPCOM IV EVENTS

OFFICIAL MEETINGS

March 23	10:00 am	UN Conference Room 1	Working Group I (Atmosphere)	Open
March 23	10:00 am	UN Conference Room 4	Working Group II (Oceans)	Open
March 23	3:00 pm	UN Conference Room 1	Plenary (Role of Major Groups)	Open
March 23	3:00 pm	UN Conference Room TBC	Working Group III (Earth Charter)	Closed
March 23	8:00 pm	UN Conference Room 4	Plenary (Technology Transfer)	Open
March 23	8:00 pm	UN Conference Room 1	Working Group I (Biological Diversity and Biotechnology)	Open

NGO AND OTHER MEETINGS

March 23	9:00 am - 10:00 am	UN Conference Room C	NGO Strategy Session	NGOs
March 23	9:00 am - 6:00 pm	UN Dag Hammarskjöld Auditorium	ICVA Forum on Sustainable Development	Open
March 23	10:00 am - 11:00 am	UN Conference Room C	Women's Caucus	NGOs
March 23	10:00 am - 11:00 am	AFS Bldg. Galatti Lounge	Youth NGOs Meeting	Youth NGOs
March 23	1:00 pm - 2:00 pm	25 Tudor City Place #1820	Strategy Session for Canadian NGOs	Canadian NGOs
March 23	1:00 pm - 3:00 pm	AFS Bldg. Galatti Lounge	Working Group of African NGOs	NGOs
March 23	1:30 pm - 2:30 pm	CCUN 2nd Floor Hospitality Center	NGO Orientation	New NGOs
March 23	2:00 pm - 4:30 pm	CCUN 8th Floor Grumman Room	NGO Working Group on Finance	NGOs
March 23	6:00 pm - 8:30 pm	UN Conference Room 2	NGO Government Dialogue & NGO Plenary "Transnational Corporations"	NGOs