



Earth Summit Bulletin

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PREPCOM HIGHLIGHTS MONDAY EVENING, 23 MARCH 1992

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER (PLENARY)

An informal session of the Plenary was held Monday evening to discuss technology transfer. Prior to the meeting, different regional groups divided the list of activities and met to prepare text. At 3:00 pm a contact group met to compile these contributions into a single negotiating text. The contact group reached agreement on 14 of the 19 paragraphs discussed. The approach taken was to resolve the easy issues and return later to the more contentious ones. The mandate entrusted to the Plenary was to resolve the five outstanding paragraphs (5, 9, 10, 13 and 15). The Vice-Chair stressed that this urgent work must be completed quickly.

Countries that had not participated in redrafting the document made a number of comments on the "Basis for action" and the "Objectives" sections. While the discussion of paragraphs 5, 9 and 10 was very thorough, no consensus was reached. This was despite the efforts of many delegations to suggest new language. Some of this text remained in brackets at the end of the evening.

One of the problematic areas in these negotiations is the US's proposal to use the term "technology cooperation." The G-77 countries continue to insist that the wording remain consistent with UN Resolution 44/228. The US has actually found mention of technology cooperation in this resolution and is continuing to insist on its use in this chapter of Agenda 21.

BIODIVERSITY (WORKING GROUP I)

Working Group I met Monday evening in an informal session to discuss biodiversity. This was the second time that the group has met to discuss this issue. The group reviewed the Chair's consolidated text of revised objectives, which reflects the integration of both the Swedish and EC proposals to replace PC/100/Add.20. The Chair insisted that the group move through the whole document in one session. The meeting lasted until past midnight and work was principally focused on small textual changes to the Chair's draft.

The group was able to finish the proposed objectives and now the Secretariat will attempt to incorporate these new objectives into a final draft for Agenda 21. Caution was taken to avoid conflict with the INC negotiations and several countries asked what would transpire if the Biodiversity Convention negotiations are not completed. Malaysia attempted to attach value to biological resources. Canada reinforced the important role of indigenous peoples in the conservation of biological diversity while Malaysia insisted that NGOs be consulted only when necessary. A number of developing countries mentioned the need to use biotechnology to conserve biodiversity. Malaysia insisted that the word "primary eco-systems" be removed from the text and that the words "biological diversity" in terms of sustainable use, be changed to "biological resources."

PREPCOM HIGHLIGHTS TUESDAY, 24 MARCH 1992

INTERNATIONAL ECONOMY (PLENARY)

The Plenary met in an informal session yesterday afternoon to discuss PC/100/Add.3/Rev.1, the Vice-Chair's compilation text on international economic issues. The Vice-Chair, Ahmed Djoghla of Algeria, stated that discussion of the document had to be completed today and that any unresolved issues would be left bracketed for consideration by the Plenary next week.

The compilation document included a number of excerpts from the Cartagena Commitment that represent the results of UNCTAD VIII. Although a number of countries wanted to make amendments to these excerpts, the Vice-Chair insisted that this

text had already been agreed upon in Cartagena and should not be modified here.

There was tension between the European Commission, which spoke on behalf of all EC member states during the discussion on trade, and a number of other states. Contentious issues included agriculture protectionism (paragraph 6) and avoidance of the use of subsidies (paragraph 19(d)).

Paragraphs on meeting international targets of official development assistance funding (paragraphs 22 and 23) remained in brackets as the US wanted to remove any mention of ODA targets. China objected saying that without ODA targets this document loses all meaning.

The US insisted on the deletion of the last two sentences in paragraph 25 under Programme Area D, "Encourage macro-economic policies conducive to sustainable development." These sentences deal with the necessary policy reforms to "release resources for supporting the transition to sustainable development" (at home and abroad) and to complement policies aimed at restraining consumption.

Discussion of the document was completed by 6:00 pm, however, 14 of the 36 paragraphs contained brackets. The Vice-Chair asked the delegates if they wanted to continue the session without interpretation and try to remove some of these brackets. Although a number of delegates left the room, discussion continued.

INTEGRATION OF ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT IN DECISION-MAKING (PLENARY)

Due to scheduling constraints, this Agenda 21 chapter was never discussed in an informal session of the Plenary. Instead, PrepCom Chair Tommy Koh decided to delegate the document directly to a contact group to negotiate the text and return agreed text back to the formal Plenary.

The contact group on this chapter met yesterday to discuss the Secretariat's compilation text, which includes changes to PC/100/Add.8 suggested by CANZ, EC, Finland, G-77 and China, the US, and Norway and Sweden. Progress was made by the group as it worked through the first programme area, "Integrating environment and development at the policy planning and management level". The Secretariat will present a revised text today on the work completed yesterday.

FOREST PRINCIPLES (WORKING GROUP I)

The contact group met yesterday behind closed doors to resume work on the third of seventeen principles. Work progressed slowly but the group was not deadlocked. Phrases are being left in brackets when there is no agreement, particularly in the cross-cutting areas that deal with: 1) the right to develop; 2) perceived infringements on national sovereignty; and 3) the notion that global interests transcend national boundaries. As of 6:00 pm last evening the group intended to work through the night until they completed discussion of the principles. The Secretariat will then produce a bracketed text for the next reading.

DESERTIFICATION (WORKING GROUP I)

The contact group on desertification met yesterday. The outstanding issue that remains is the question of a possible global convention on desertification. African countries are strongly in support of such a measure, while Northern countries maintain that other legal mechanisms short of a global convention may be sufficient to deal with the problem. It is largely felt that the decision to proceed with negotiations or not, will not be resolved here, but rather, remains to be decided at the highest political level. On a related note, it appears that certain Northern countries may be prepared to broaden the mandate of the GEF to include financing of a potential desertification convention.

EARTH CHARTER (WORKING GROUP III)

The Earth Charter contact group met in a closed session to continue its principle-by-principle discussion of the Secretariat's non-paper. The current work method of the contact group has been to proceed through the text and to come to general agreement regarding underlying approaches and concepts. To date, there have been no actual negotiations on the precise wording.

By 1:00 pm, the group had reached Principle 13. Agreement-in-principle was reached on the following "concepts": the need for a balanced reference to poverty in the text; integration of environment and development; the precautionary principle; common but differentiated responsibilities; special needs and considerations of developing countries; the role of women and indigenous peoples; and public participation.

Some Northern delegations are concerned that the Secretariat's compilation text is far from what a desired negotiating text should be. Until such a text is prepared, it is believed that detailed negotiations and actual drafting cannot proceed. The contact group met again Tuesday evening to continue its reading of the text and to decide on the next course of action. It is possible that small drafting groups will be established for each principle.

INSTITUTIONS (WORKING GROUP III)

Working Group III met today to discuss institutional arrangements and, specifically, the Vice-Chair's draft text (CRP.3). Delegates were unanimous in their acceptance of the Vice-Chair's (Ambassador Ismail Razali of Malaysia) text as the basis for negotiations.

Of particular note in CRP.3 is the proposal that the UN General Assembly be entrusted with the power to carry out supreme policy-making and review on matters relating to UNCED follow-up. High-level coordination of the UN system in Agenda 21 follow-up is proposed to be entrusted in the existing Administrative Committee on Coordination of the UN. CRP.3 also proposes that ECOSOC undertake the work of policy review and oversee system-wide coordination of the implementation of Agenda 21 by the various UN bodies. As well, the document proposes the establishment of a Sustainable Development Commission to monitor sustainable development performance at the national and regional levels.

The general comments of delegates revolved around the proposed Sustainable Development Commission. Many delegations requested clarification as to how the proposed Commission will be linked to ECOSOC and the General Assembly. Several delegations requested that the sections regarding national government follow-up, as well as the role of NGOs, be expanded.

Discussion then focused on the "Basis for Action" and "Objectives" sections. Certain delegations requested that the title "Basis for Action" be changed to "Principles". The Chair noted that the choice of title was consistent with the format adhered to in every other Agenda 21 chapter. Delegates also expressed concerns regarding what they perceived as unnecessarily specific language of paragraph 2 in the "Basis for Action" section (that refers to the fact that agreement on institutional arrangements can only be

achieved once agreement on the Earth Charter, Agenda 21, as well as the transfer of resources and technology are settled). There were suggestions to broaden the "Objectives" section to encompass NGOs and national governments.

The Chair will compile all proposed amendments to these sections for today's session. He did note, however, his disappointment with the group's slow progress and urged that they increase the pace. Razali did not support the call for a contact group.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY AT PREPCOM

ROLE OF MAJOR GROUPS (PLENARY): The Plenary will resume discussion on PC/100/Add.13, "Strengthening the role of major groups" both this afternoon and evening. Representatives from some of the major groups are expected to make formal statements before discussion returns to the document. The Plenary will begin with Programme Area II, "Strengthening the role of youth." The Plenary will have to increase the pace of discussion if it expects to finish the remaining programme areas in the five hours allotted. Subsequent chapters to be discussed are: indigenous peoples, non-governmental organizations, local authorities, trade unions, business and industry, the scientific and technological community and farmers.

ATMOSPHERE (WORKING GROUP I): Working Group I will meet this morning to resume where last night's session left off. The group will presumably have chosen to proceed with negotiations on the basis of either the G-77 text or the original Secretariat text (PC/100/Add.14). A contact group was to have met yesterday afternoon and all bets were on the G-77 text to emerge as the basis for negotiations, especially since the US has no major problems with the G-77 version.

FRESHWATER (WORKING GROUP II): Working Group II will reconvene this morning to review the work of the contact group on freshwater resources. The contact group appeared to reach consensus on all issues except for transboundary or shared water resources. A sub-contact group was established to deal exclusively with this issue. Look for this issue to resurface in the working group meeting this morning.

EARTH CHARTER (WORKING GROUP III)

The Earth Charter contact group will continue its reading of the Secretariat's non-paper. In light of the fact that this text is not an actual negotiating text, the next challenge for the group will be to develop some form of a drafting procedure. It is probable that small groups will be formed to draft individual principles.

INSTITUTIONS (WORKING GROUP III)

Working Group III will continue its reading of CRP.3, the Chair's proposed Agenda 21 text. Delegates will continue to table their amendments. Numerous countries have specifically requested NGO input regarding the role of NGOs as articulated in the proposed text. Delegates may continue to press for the establishment of a contact group in light of the short time remaining to complete their work.

SCHEDULE OF PREPCOM IV EVENTS

OFFICIAL MEETINGS

March 25	10:00 am	UN Conference Room 1	Working Group I (Atmosphere)	Open
March 25	10:00 am	UN Conference Room 4	Working Group II (Freshwater)	Open
March 25	3:00 pm	UN Conference Room 6	Working Group III (Earth Charter)	Closed
March 25	3:00 pm	UN Conference Room 4	Plenary (Major Groups)	Open
March 25	8:00 pm	UN Conference Room 4	Plenary (Major Groups)	Open
March 25	8:00 pm	UN Conference Room 1	Working Group III (Institutional Issues)	Open

NGO AND OTHER MEETINGS

March 25	9:00 am - 10:00 am	UN Conference Room C	NGO Strategy Session	NGOs
March 25	10:00 am - 11:00 am	UN Conference Room C	Women's Caucus	NGOs
March 25	10:00 am - 11:00 am	AFS Bldg. Galatti Lounge	Meeting of Youth NGOs	NGOs
March 25	1:00 pm - 2:00 pm	CCUN 10th Floor Conf. Room 10H	NGO Working Group on Forests	NGOs
March 25	1:00 pm - 2:30 pm	TBA	Luncheon on Institutional Matters: Gov't-NGO Dialogue	Open
March 25	2:00 pm - 4:00 pm	CCUN 10th Floor Conf. Room 10H	NGO Working Group on Oceans	NGOs
March 25	2:00 pm - 6:00 pm	UN Dag Hammarskjöld Auditorium	ICVA Panel on Gender Issues in Sustainable Development	Open
March 25	3:00 pm - 5:00 pm	UNIFEM Bldg. Conference Room on 6th Floor	NGO Working Group on Finance	NGOs
March 25	3:00 pm - 5:00 pm	CCUN 8th Floor Grumman Room	Task Group on Sustainable Development	NGOs
March 25	6:00 pm - 8:30 pm	UN Conference Room 2	NGO Government Dialogue & NGO Plenary " Militarism, Development and the Environment "	NGOs
March 25	8:00 pm - 9:30 pm	CCUN 10th Floor Conf. Room 10H	Task Group on Sustainable Agriculture	NGOs