



## PREPCOM HIGHLIGHTS WEDNESDAY EVENING, 25 MARCH

### ROLE OF MAJOR GROUPS (PLENARY)

An informal meeting was held Wednesday night to continue discussion of PC/100/Add.13, "Strengthening the role of major groups". The discussion began with the section on youth. The paragraph recommending that an International Youth Council be created was deleted. This decision was based on suggestions from young people and reflected the concern that no new institutions be created. The youth section was completed but a contact group was established to reconsider specific paragraphs.

### EARTH CHARTER (WORKING GROUP III)

The Earth Charter contact group met last night to commence actual negotiations on the Secretariat's compilation text. The work method has been to delegate those principles which are ripe for consensus (the "easy principles") to a sub-contact group. Those issues which are still seen to be contentious have been left for further discussion by the larger contact group. By the end of yesterday evening's session, the sub-contact group was able to commence drafting on four principles: right to development; integration of environment and development; eradication of poverty; and special needs of developing countries.

### INSTITUTIONS (WORKING GROUP III)

Working Group III resumed discussion of the Coordinator's draft Agenda 21 chapter on Institutions (CRP.3) Wednesday evening. The informal session began with the "Objectives" section and moved quickly to a discussion on the "Institutional Structures" section. As in the general discussion on Tuesday afternoon, the majority of the evening's session was spent discussing the proposed Commission on Sustainable Development, its functions, and its relationship to ECOSOC and the General Assembly. In this context, a number of delegations (including Argentina, the UK and Austria) stated that the proposed Commission, as a functional arm of ECOSOC, would downgrade and sectoralize sustainable development while adding another level of bureaucracy.

Other delegations supported the proposal, however, they argued that the follow-up to Agenda-21, as well as the broader context of sustainable development, were important enough to merit special consideration at the inter-governmental level and should not be left only to ECOSOC and/or the General Assembly. Citing the merits in each argument, Australia proposed a hybrid solution in which a Sustainable Development Commission would function as a third committee of ECOSOC (in addition to the Economic and Social Committees) and would therefore report directly to the General Assembly.

## PREPCOM HIGHLIGHTS THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 1992

### INTERNATIONAL ECONOMY (PLENARY)

The Plenary met this morning in an informal session to discuss PC/100/Add.3/Rev.2, "International cooperation to accelerate sustainable development in developing countries and related domestic policies". The Vice-Chair, Ahmed Djoghla of Algeria, opened the meeting by stating that this document was compiled after Tuesday's discussion and had only nine brackets. He expressed hope that today's discussion would focus solely on removing these remaining brackets. The US delegate then announced that this document was reviewed in Washington and, thus, he would like to propose some new amendments. Mexico and Colombia said that they did not want to reopen text on which agreement had been reached. The Vice-Chair announced that they

would address the bracketed text first and then return to the new US amendments.

After the first reading, brackets remained on paragraphs dealing with: agriculture protectionism; the use of trade restrictions for environmental objectives; levels of official development assistance funding; and encouraging policy reforms in developed countries to support the transition to sustainable development in both developed and developing countries.

Djoghla then opened the floor to additional amendments. Cuba requested that none of the text excerpted from the Cartagena Commitment (UNCTAD VIII) be reopened. Djoghla then proceeded to eliminate any US amendments to the Cartagena text. By the end of the meeting more text was bracketed than had been at the start.

### LAND RESOURCES (WORKING GROUP I)

Working Group I began the final stage of its work yesterday afternoon as it began to dispose of Agenda 21 chapters ready for transmittal to the Plenary. Chair Bo Kjellén announced a Saturday noon deadline for text completion. He added that there are many documents with unresolved problems. He suggested that the group review the new documents L.39 through L.42. Where there are passages that cannot be agreed to, these parts would be bracketed and sent on to the Plenary.

The Chair opened discussion on a revised version of PC/WG.I/L.39, the text on combating desertification and drought. He said that after extensive consultations the only outstanding point that remains is the question of how to treat the issue of a possible legally binding instrument or convention. This paragraph will remain bracketed and left for discussion next week.

Kjellén moved to PC/WG.I/L.40, the revised version of PC/100/Add.18 "Managing fragile ecosystems: sustainable mountain development." There were no other problems and the Chair moved on. PC/WG.I/L.41, the text submitted by the Chair on the basis of negotiations held on PC/100/Add.15, "Integrated approach to the planning and management of land resources" was sent on to the Plenary without problems.

PC/WG.I/L.42, the new version of PC/100/Add.19, "Promoting Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development", had presented problems for the contact group. Both items dealing with trade issues and "Means of implementation" will have to be dealt with next week. A contact group dealing with programme areas on both plant and animal genetic resources had finished consultations yesterday morning and were able to present text that will be left for specific debate later.

### OCEANS (WORKING GROUP II)

Working Group II began its meeting yesterday afternoon with a discussion of PC/WG.II/L.25/Add.3, the revised text of Programme Area A (coastal zone management). This represented the second reading of this programme area since it was returned from the contact group. Most of the amendments made to this document were of an editorial nature.

Discussion then moved on to PC/WG.II/L.25/Corr.1, a compilation of amendments made to Programme Areas E and G after last week's reading. After the last reading of Programme Area E, "Addressing Critical Uncertainties", a contact group was established and agreed to retain reference to ozone depletion in the text. When the working group reached paragraph 113 (the first mention of ozone depletion), France made an intervention requesting its deletion from the text. Argentina, Mexico and the US immediately voiced their displeasure with this amendment as consensus had been reached in the contact group. France eventually withdrew its amendment.

The US proposed amending paragraph 117(b) to include the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS). This had been deleted from the original text. The amendment appeared to be accepted by the Latin American countries in conjunction with Mexico's

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amendment stating that developed countries provide the financing for the development and implementation of the GOOS.

In the discussion of Programme Area G, "Sustainable development of small islands," Turkey intervened and offered new language to replace paragraph 148 that had been deleted at the last session. The new text reads, "The arrangement in this programme area should not be interpreted in any sense so as to prejudice the delimitation of maritime areas concerning the countries involved." Cyprus immediately objected, saying that this introduces a political issue in a non-political document. Although Venezuela suggested compromise text, Greece objected. The Chair recommended that Greece and Turkey hold consultations, moderated by Barbados, on this issue.

#### EARTH CHARTER (WORKING GROUP III)

The Earth Charter drafting group met yesterday morning to continue negotiations on the so-called "easy principles": capacity building, decision-making, natural disasters, and women. The principle pertaining to the role of women is the only one that has been actually agreed to, with only a few words remaining in square brackets.

In the afternoon, the contact group chose to concentrate on three of the more complicated principles: common but differentiated responsibilities; right to development; and humans as the centre of development.

#### INSTITUTIONS (WORKING GROUP III)

Thursday morning's session began with a discussion of the UN Secretariat's support for the proposed Sustainable Development Commission. Several delegations, including the UK and China, stated that under the UN Charter, the UN Secretary-General had the discretion to make recommendations on the staffing and structure of the UN Secretariat and that UNCED should only request that the Secretary-General establish an appropriate support structure and/or follow-up to Agenda 21. Other delegations maintained that the UNCED Secretariat be incorporated into any such support structure. Both of these points raise questions concerning the next steps in the UN Secretary-General's overall reforms.

There seemed to be general agreement that UNEP should be strengthened in areas such as environmental monitoring and assessment; the provision of expert advice on environmental matters; the promotion of international environmental law; and its role at the regional level. On the other hand, aside from the statements of Mauritania and Brazil, there was no explicit discussion of the need to increase UNEP's financial resources. There was also resistance by the UK and the US to the idea of UNEP's involvement in the developmental side of environmental matters. The Netherlands reiterated its proposal to create an International Ombudsman's Office on Environment, under UNEP, that would review and evaluate national and international efforts to implement Agenda 21. This issue is completely absent from CRP.3. The Working Group was able to complete its review of the document by the end of the morning's session. Other issues discussed included the role of UNDP; regional and national implementation; cooperation between UN functional bodies and international financial institutions; legal aspects; and the role of NGOs.

## THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW AT PREPCOM

**ROLE OF MAJOR GROUPS (PLENARY):** The Plenary is scheduled to continue its discussion on the role of major groups tonight. Contact group meetings were held all day yesterday. The chapters on women and youth were completed and discussion began on indigenous peoples. It is possible that contact groups will continue to meet during the day and the informal Plenary session will pick up where the contact group leaves off.

**BIODIVERSITY AND BIOTECHNOLOGY (WORKING GROUP I):** These two Agenda 21 chapters have been the focus of intense contact group discussion over the last several days. According to Working Group Chair Bo Kjellén, the documents are close to resolution. Portions of biodiversity text, including the section on the rights of countries that are sources of biodiversity, will probably be bracketed. In the biotechnology text look for continuing debate over the issue of safety.

**FORESTS AND ATMOSPHERE (WORKING GROUP I):** Informal sessions are scheduled for today and tomorrow to resolve three outstanding matters in Working Group I: the Forest Principles text and the Agenda 21 chapters on deforestation and atmosphere. The forest documents were discussed last night in a contact group and should be ready for today's session, although the Principles document might arrive heavily bracketed. Negotiators of the atmosphere chapter were expected to work last night until the document was ready to send to the Secretariat for "cleaning" and further discussion on Saturday morning.

**WASTES (WORKING GROUP II):** Working Group II will have two sessions on wastes today. The group will first address hazardous wastes (PC/WG.II/L.28) to be followed by solid wastes and sewage-related issues (PC/WG.II/L.26). If all goes according to schedule, the group will finish up with a discussion of radioactive wastes (PC/WG.II/L.27). It appears as though the Vice-Chair has managed to broker consensus between parties to retain this chapter in Agenda 21.

**OCEANS (WORKING GROUP II):** Working Group II will meet Saturday morning to conclude its discussion on oceans. It appears as though compromise language has been found for most of the contentious issues in the programme area on marine living resources. There are three issues that have caused the most difficulty. First is the International Whaling Commission. New Zealand, the US, the UK, Australia and others recognize the IWC as the appropriate international organization for the conservation and management of whales. Iceland has disagreed and has not wanted to endorse the IWC in Agenda 21. The second issue is the treatment of marine mammals in the document. Iceland and the other whaling nations have supported the phrase "sustainable use of living marine resources" (that would include marine mammals). Other nations, including the US, disagree. Finally, there is still significant disagreement between the co-sponsors of the Santiago Paper (New Zealand, Canada and 38 others) and the EC.

**INSTITUTIONS (WORKING GROUP III):** Since the Working Group has completed its first reading to the Chair's Agenda 21 text, the next step will involve preparation of a compilation text by the Chair to serve as the basis of negotiations.

## SCHEDULE OF PREPCOM IV EVENTS

### OFFICIAL MEETINGS

March 27	10:00 am	UN Conference Room 4	Working Group I (Forests)	Open
March 27	10:00 am	UN Conference Room 1	Working Group III (Legal & Institutional Issues)	Open
March 27	3:00 pm	UN Conference Room 1	Working Group I (Biodiversity & Biotechnology)	Open
March 27	3:00 pm	UN Conference Room 4	Working Group II (Wastes)	Open
March 27	8:00 pm	UN Conference Room 4	Plenary (Major Groups)	Open
March 27	8:00 pm	UN Conference Room 1	Working Group II (Wastes)	Open

### NGO AND OTHER MEETINGS

March 27	9:00 am - 10:00 am	UN Conference Room 1	NGO Strategy Session	NGOs
March 27	10:00 am - 11:00 am	UN Conference Room C	Women's Caucus	NGOs
March 27 & 28	10:00 am - 11:00 am	CCUN 10th Floor Conf. Room 10H	Task Force Working Group on Human Settlements	NGOs
March 27	10:00 am - 11:00 am	AFS Bldg. Galatti Lounge	Meeting of Youth NGOs	Youth NGOs
March 27 & 28	12:00 pm - 1:00 pm & 10:00 am - 12:00 pm	CCUN 8th Floor Grumman Room	Meeting of the International Indigenous Commission	NGOs
March 27	1:00 pm - 2:00 pm	CCUN 10th Fl. Conf. Room 10H	NGO Working Group on Forests	NGOs
March 27	2:00 pm - 4:30 pm	CCUN 10th Fl. Conf. Room 10H	NGO Working Group on Finance	NGOs
March 27	3:00 pm - 5:00 pm	CCUN 8th Fl. Grumman Room	Task Group on Sustainable Agriculture	NGOs
March 27	6:00 pm - 8:30 pm	UN Conference Room 2	NGO Government Dialogue & NGO Plenary "NGO Treaties"	NGOs