



Earth Summit Bulletin

Vol. 2 No. 11

Published by Island Press and the International Institute for Sustainable Development

Saturday, 13 June 1992

UNCED HIGHLIGHTS, 12 JUNE 1992

MINISTERIAL CONSULTATIONS

FORESTS: The Forest Principles document was finalized Friday morning at 3:00 am and was scheduled to be sent to the Plenary Friday night at 11:00 pm. In a open-ended ministerial level meeting that began Thursday night at 10:00 pm, 18 countries, represented by no less than 11 ministers, finally agreed after modifications to an eight-paragraph package proposed by Klaus Töpfer, the German Federal Minister for the Environment. This agreement includes the following points (italicized text reflects new language):

- Paragraph (a) of the preamble was modified to read as follows: "The subject of forests is related to the entire range of environmental and development issues and opportunities including *the right to socio-economic development on a sustainable basis.*"
- Paragraph (d) of the preamble that dealt with a possible future legal instrument for forests was replaced with language that commits the governments to a prompt implementation of the principles and that they decide to keep them "*under assessment for their adequacy with regard to further international cooperation on forest issues.*"
- In paragraph (f) of the preamble, the phrase "are of value to the global environment" was replaced by "*and are of value to local communities and to the environment as a whole.*"
- Preamble paragraph (g) was replaced with the sentence, "*Forests are essential to economic development and the maintenance of all forms of life.*" This replaces a complicated set of competing formulations including some phrases surrounded by three sets of brackets.
- Paragraph 17 (carbon sinks) was deleted and elements placed into paragraph 2(b) that deals with the needs and uses of forests. The terms "photosynthesis" and "carbon fixation" were replaced with "*carbon sinks and reservoirs.*"
- Paragraph 8(d) was re-written to read "Sustainable forest management and use should be carried out in accordance with *national development policies and priorities and on the basis of environmentally sound national guidelines. In the formulation of such guidelines, account should be taken, as appropriate and if applicable, of relevant agreed methodologies and criteria.*"
- Paragraph 8(g), that addresses the sharing of biotechnology (from the North) in exchange for access to biodiversity (from the South), was reformulated to allow access to biological resources in trade for the sharing of technology and profits from biotechnology "*on mutually agreed terms.*"
- Paragraph 8(h), dealing with environmental impact statements was amended to read "*and where such actions are subject to a decision of a competent national authority.*"
- Paragraph 12 (transfer of technology) was adopted, as suggested in Töpfer's "package", to include the phrase, "*access to and transfer of environmentally sound technologies and corresponding know-how on favourable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed, in accordance with the relevant provisions of Agenda 21, should be promoted, facilitated and financed, as appropriate.*"
- The "trade policies" paragraph was amended with the phrase, "*adequate policies, aimed at management, conservation and*

sustainable development of forests, including where appropriate incentives, should be encouraged."

- Paragraph 15(b), which dealt with international trade in sustainably managed forest resources, was deleted.

The only other outstanding issue was paragraph 11.14(e) from the Agenda 21 chapter on combatting deforestation that addresses the principles and the possibility of future international agreements on forests. This was amended to read as follows: governments would "*consider the need for and the feasibility of all kinds of appropriate internationally agreed arrangements to promote international cooperation on forest management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests including afforestation, reforestation, and rehabilitation.*"

FINANCIAL RESOURCES: Final negotiations on financial resources appeared to be drawing to a successful close as of late Friday afternoon. In his progress report to the General Committee (members of the Bureaus of both the Plenary and the Main Committee) at noon Friday, Amb. Rubens Ricúpero announced that consensus had been reached on several paragraphs:

- In paragraph 10, the sentence that deals with the provision of new and additional resources, and includes the word "including", was broken into two parts. The first sentence now only deals with the fact that the implementation of Agenda 21 requires new and additional resources. The second sentence now deals with the terms on which these resources will be provided.
- In paragraph 16(a)(iii), on the GEF, the problem pertained to the word "conditionality." The compromise now reads, "Ensure access to and disbursement of the funds under mutually agreed criteria without *introducing new forms of conditionality.*"

Jan Pronk, Minister of Development Cooperation from the Netherlands, has been assigned responsibility for conducting bilateral consultations on paragraph 15, which deals with targets and timetables for ODA. As of late Friday afternoon, consultations were still underway.

As of Friday afternoon, Ambassador Ricúpero was still holding consultations on paragraph 16(a)(i), that deals with IDA and the "Earth Increment". The present round of IDA replenishment, IDA-10, is underway and will conclude in December 1992. Current textual options call for IDA-10 to be maintained at IDA-9 levels, corrected in real terms, plus an increase of approximately US\$5 billion in the form of the Earth Increment. Some governments are concerned that if UNCED commits to levels for the IDA-10 replenishment it will limit or foreclose options within the ongoing negotiations in other fora. Others believe that it is unrealistic to set funding levels before reviewing the projects that IDA-10 would fund. Delegates within the negotiations believed that compromise language would be found before the 11:00 pm deadline.

Finally, paragraph 16(e), which deals with debt relief, is now under review. Particularly problematic, for some developed countries, is the phrase "further measures and eligible countries should be kept under review." Some countries feel that this might expand the list of countries available for special debt relief consideration beyond the list of the poorest heavily indebted countries under an expanded definition of the Trinidad agreement of December 1991. By late Friday afternoon, text was being circulated privately among governments. This text was reported to replace this phrase with: "*debt problems of the poorest and low and middle income countries will be kept under review.*"

Negotiators were confident that this would be resolved in time for the 11:00 pm Plenary.

ATMOSPHERE: Informal consultations continued at the ministerial level to resolve the one outstanding issue in the Atmosphere chapter, the phrase "safe and" wherever the reference to energy systems occurs in the chapter. The Saudis continue to press for the retention of the phrase, despite the opposition of many countries who maintain that the phrase connotes an anti-nuclear bias. In an effort to broker compromise, Amb. Bo Kjellén, chair of the Atmosphere contact group that met over the last two weeks, presented a generic solution whereby the reference to "safe and" would be deleted from the chapter and a reference would be inserted in the chapeau to Agenda 21 to state that wherever technology is referred to in the document, it should be assumed that such reference implies environmentally safe and sound technology. Besides the Chair's proposal, the only other viable solution would be to delete, against the Saudis' will, the reference to "safe and". However, in so doing, the Saudis would retain the right to make formal reservations to the section. In yesterday's ministerial consultations, it appeared that the Saudis would not accept the so-called "chapeau" solution, thus presenting the group with the latter option. By 6:00 pm it appeared that this issue would have to be resolved in Plenary.

PLENARY

58 Heads of State or Government gave speeches in the Friday session of the Summit. Some of the key points of several of those speeches are summarized below:

Indian Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao's speech focused on the key development concerns of the G-77. He referred poignantly to the fact that we inhabit a single planet but several worlds, and that such a fragmented planet cannot survive in harmony with Nature and the environment. Narasimha called for recognition of the reality that the resources of the planet can sustain a given population within a certain range of exploitation, subject to a given rate of regeneration and maintenance. Any imbalance in the equation is sure to cut short the life of the planet.

UK Prime Minister John Major referred to the fact that much environmental degradation has been inflicted, not out of greed or malice, but out of ignorance. Major expressed disappointment with some of the Conference's results, especially the lack of a binding agreement on forests, and called for effective follow-up to both the Climate Change and Biodiversity Conventions. Specific commitments announced include: hosting of a Global Technology Partnership Conference; commitment to new and additional resources through the GEF (although no amount was indicated); support for the Earth Increment; and hosting a major NGO global forum on the NGO role in the implementation of Agenda 21.

On behalf of the EC and its member states, Portuguese Prime Minister Anibal Cavaco Silva praised the Rio Declaration as a basis for the establishment of new relations between all parties that will have to provide answers appropriate to the challenge at hand. Although he did express disappointment with the Biodiversity Convention for having fallen short of initial expectations, Silva appealed for the greatest number of States to sign and ratify the Convention. Commitments were also made to allocate US\$4 billion, including new and additional resources, for specific projects and key programmes in Agenda 21.

Cuban President Fidel Castro's speech, while shortest in length, aroused the greatest volume of applause. Castro called for a more equitable distribution of wealth and technologies to spare humanity from mass destruction; repayment of the ecological debt in lieu of the foreign debt; science working for sustainable development without contamination; and the elimination of hunger instead of mankind. He urged that "less luxury and wastage in a few countries would amount to less poverty and hunger in a large part of the Earth".

Justice D.F. Annan, Vice-President of Ghana, articulated the major concerns of the G-77 that will hinder implementation of Agenda 21 and that were inadequately addressed at UNCED: lack of attention regarding the existent adverse international economic environment; inequities within the world trade regime; restricted access to world markets; unfair commodity pricing; unsustainable consumption in the North; debt relief; separate funding mechanisms beyond the GEF; and favorable access to

private-sector held technologies for developing countries.

Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney proposed a five-point plan for implementation of UNCED outcomes. Most noteworthy were the financial commitments: Cdn\$115 million to developing countries for forest management; elimination of Cdn\$145 million ODA debt of Latin American countries in exchange for sustainable development projects; replenishment to the GEF (although no amount specified); and Cdn\$50 million in humanitarian assistance to drought-stricken nations.

US President George Bush stressed the strong environmental record of the US, which he called "second to none". Recognizing the criticism that the US has faced, he said, "I didn't come here to apologize." Bush announced that he had just signed the Climate Change Convention and called for a meeting to be held before 1 January 1993 to discuss means of implementing the Convention. He stated that US initiatives to protect biodiversity will exceed the provisions of the Convention but that he will not sign it.

Latvian President Anatolijs Gorbunovs stressed the difficulty in overcoming the crisis left behind by a century of totalitarian rule. He appealed for support of the demand of the withdrawal of Soviet troops from the Baltic Republics and called for a "Disarmament for Environment" summit meeting early next summer.

L. Erskine Sandiford, Prime Minister of Barbados, said that the Climate Change Convention is not perfect, but provides a basis for future negotiations. He urged that the first protocol address stabilization and reduction of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases. He closed with a poem, "Ode to the Environment," that he wrote on the occasion of this conference.

Dutch Prime Minister R.F.M. Lubbers announced that Dutch ODA levels exceed the 0.7% target. "My government is willing to provide new and additional financial resources up to a maximum of 0.1% GNP for the implementation of global environmental agreements, provided that other countries take a similar course in generating resources for such an earth increment," he said. He also stated that the Netherlands will continue to call for the involvement of NGOs in the UN decision-making process.

Colombian President Cesar Gaviria Trujillo said that UNCED has fallen short on the issue of financing and that funding from developed countries are not only inadequate but they focus on the environment not development. "Sooner or later the planet will send all of us the bill, rich and poor alike."

Croatian Prime Minister Franjo Greguric said that international recognition has not brought peace to Croatia. Croatia must first restore peace and only then can it address the massive environmental destruction that the war has brought. He concluded by reading from a letter from a nine-year-old girl: "The earth suffers because so few people love it."

Russian Vice President A.V. Rutskoy announced that the Russian Federation is setting up new environmental structures and has learned lessons from a history of environmental disasters, the worst of which was Chernobyl. Since ecological catastrophes know no international boundaries, there must be environmental monitoring and an ecological early warning system.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

PLENARY: The Plenary resumes this morning to hear speeches from 28 Heads of State or Government in the morning and an additional 21 in the afternoon. Speakers include Nicaraguan President Violeta Barrios de Chamorro and Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland, the only women out of 107 Heads of State or Government that will have addressed the Plenary by the end of the day.

MEETING OF HEADS OF STATE OR GOVERNMENT: This meeting will commence after the conclusion of the final meeting of the Summit this afternoon. Although it is scheduled for 5:00 pm, it will not start until the last of the 49 speakers has concluded his speech. Only one Head of State or Government and one aide will be able to attend. There will be only eight speakers in the one-hour session: President Collor, the President of the Conference, UN Secretary-General Boutros-Boutros Ghali, UNCED Secretary-General Maurice Strong and representatives from the five regional groups.