



Earth Summit Bulletin

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UNCED HIGHLIGHTS 13 JUNE 1992

PLENARY I

The Plenary met at 12:45 am Saturday morning in an effort to approve the two outstanding issues that remained in Agenda 21: finance and atmosphere. The closed meeting was originally scheduled for 11:00 pm but was delayed due to ongoing consultations on both of these issues. However, when the meeting finally got underway, agreement had not yet been reached.

The Plenary first heard a report from German Federal Minister for the Environment Klaus Töpfer, who coordinated the successful ministerial-level consultations on forests. Then Amb. Rubens Ricúpero delivered a status report on the ministerial-level consultations on finance. He reported that compromise had been reached on paragraph 16(e) on debt relief. Although this text was not originally bracketed by the Main Committee, a reformulation was achieved that resolves problems certain developed countries had with the phrase: "further measures and eligible countries should be kept under review." It was believed that this would expand the list of middle and low income indebted countries eligible for debt relief under the terms of the Trinidad agreement of December 1991. The agreed text adds the sentence, "*Measures to address the continuing debt problems of low and middle income countries should be kept under review.*"; and replaces the original text with, "*debt relief measures should be kept under review so as to address the continuing difficulties of those countries.*"

Ricúpero then reported that after extensive negotiations, they had reached a formulation on paragraph 16(a)(i) on the International Development Association. The new text removes any specific reference to the "Earth Increment" and directs the IDA Deputies to give special consideration to World Bank President Lewis Preston's statement to the UNCED Plenary, "*in order to help poorer countries meet their sustainable development objectives as contained in Agenda 21.*" On 4 June, Preston proposed an additional volume of resources for the IDA-10 replenishment (1993-95) in order to maintain IDA-9 funding in real terms and, if donors support such an initiative, re-allocate part of the World Bank's net income to the Earth Increment for national environmental issues. This reformulation removes language in Agenda 21 that some developed countries believed would foreclose and prejudice the IDA-10 replenishment negotiations currently underway in another fora.

Lafer then announced that consultations on other matters relating to finance (ODA targets) and atmosphere were proceeding and that he was confident that the "Spirit of Rio" will prevail and a consensus formula would be reached soon. At this point Pakistan, on behalf of the G-77, requested time to study the IDA proposal. He said that although it has considerable merit, essential elements are missing in this formulation and he would, therefore, have to convene a G-77 meeting. Lafer then adjourned the meeting at 1:15 am.

IN THE CORRIDORS

The G-77 met Saturday morning to discuss the new text for paragraph 16(a)(i) of the finance chapter, which deals with IDA replenishment. Although not all G-77 members were satisfied

with the text, they agreed that this may be the best available compromise.

Meanwhile, consultations continued on paragraph 15 on targets and timetables for ODA. As of Saturday morning, the document under discussion contained five formulations of the sentence that applies to those countries that have already affirmed a target of 0.7% of GNP for ODA by the year 2000. One of the problems faced in these consultations was the lack of finance ministers present in Rio. It was hoped that ministers and delegates would consult with their finance ministers during the course of the day so as to facilitate the decision-making process. One of the major sticking points is the inability of the EC to reach consensus. While the Netherlands and France support 0.7% of GNP for ODA by the year 2000, Great Britain and Germany do not. The United States has not been involved in the discussions since they are not affected by the resolution of either targets or timetables for increased ODA, having never committed to such targets.

At 3:30 pm the door opened and the participants emerged with an agreed text. After consultations with the regional groups, it was apparent that further consultations were necessary. Just before 7:00 pm, agreement was reached. The new text, which begins after the second sentence in the existing paragraph, reads: "Developed countries reaffirm their commitments to reach the accepted UN target of 0.7% of GNP for ODA and, to the extent that they have not yet achieved that target, agree to augment their aid programmes in order to reach that target as soon as possible and to ensure a prompt and effective implementation of Agenda 21. Some countries agreed or had agreed to reach the target by the year 2000. It was decided that the Commission on Sustainable Development will regularly review and monitor progress towards this target. This review process should systematically combine the monitoring of the implementation of Agenda 21 with a review of the financial resources available." The paragraph then resumes with the existing text beginning with "Those which have already reached the target are to be commended and encouraged..."

PLENARY II

The Plenary reconvened at 7:30 pm Saturday night. The meeting was scheduled for 4:00 pm, however, due to continuing consultations on atmosphere and finance, it was delayed. During the 15-minute meeting, the Plenary quickly adopted two paragraphs in the finance text: 16(a)(i) on IDA and paragraph 15 on ODA (see texts above). The Plenary also succeeded in removing brackets and/or footnotes, related to the outcome of the discussions on finance, from a number of paragraphs in Chapters 11 (forests), 17 (oceans), 18 (freshwater), and 21 (solid wastes). Finally, the Chair, Celso Lafer, asked Amb. Bo Kjellén to report on progress made in resolving the bracketed phrase "safe and" in the atmosphere and technology transfer chapters. Kjellén requested more time as consultations were ongoing. Lafer then adjourned the Plenary until 9:15 pm.

The Plenary did not convene again until 10:20 pm. At that time, Kjellén reported that a generic solution to the problems related to "safe and" had been found. The agreed text should be a new paragraph in the Preamble of Agenda 21 and reads: "Throughout Agenda 21, the term 'environmentally sound' means 'environmentally safe and sound', in particular when applied to the terms 'energy sources', 'energy supplies', 'energy systems' or 'technology/technologies'." The result of this formulation is that all the brackets covering the notion of "safe and" would disappear

and the text "safe and" would be deleted. A number of Arab states, including Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Morocco and Iran then expressed reservations about the resolution of Chapter 9 on Atmosphere. The text was approved at 10:45 pm. As this was the last issue to be resolved in Agenda 21, the text is now "bracket-free" and ready to be sent to the formal Plenary for adoption. Saudi Arabia, however, announced that it would like to place reservations on the entire text of Agenda 21.

THE SUMMIT

The Plenary continued yesterday with speeches by Heads of State and Government. The first speaker of the morning was Mohammad Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister of Pakistan and Chairman of the G-77, who quoted from the Quran, "Disorder and destruction have appeared on earth and in the oceans due to what the hands of man have done." He cited as the fundamental cause of the present economic and environmental crisis, the unjust world economic order and called poverty the "ugliest scar" on the planet.

The Swedish Prime Minister, Carl Bildt, called it a "moral duty" for rich countries to reach 0.7% of GNP for ODA, and he appealed to other countries to share in the efforts to solve problems with nuclear safety, especially in the former Soviet Union. After the nine minute address by the Prime Minister of Mauritania, President Collor had to remind the leaders of the seven minute time limit.

Japanese Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa's speech, that was to be broadcast into the Plenary, was reportedly cancelled by UN Secretary-General Boutros-Boutros Ghali on the grounds that it would set a bad precedent within the UN. The Japanese leader's speech was circulated later in the day. He stated, without citing a figure, that Japan should "consider a positive contribution" to the GEF and that it was increasing its environment-related aid from US\$3.1 billion over the last three years to between US\$7 and US\$7.7 billion during the next five years.

Won-Shik Chung, Prime Minister of Korea, noted in his speech the ironic ecological inheritance from the Cold War -- a 258 km by 4 km ecological reservoir across the middle of the Korean Peninsula and he proposed a joint South and North Korea survey of the region in collaboration with the UN.

Felipe Gonzalez, Prime Minister of Spain, called for a world conference on forests. Abdou Diouf, President of Senegal, stressed the importance of solar energy and called for its promotion. Austrian Chancellor Franz Vranitzky said that "in order to be successful, structural changes in the economic, the social and the ecological systems of the industrialized states will be inevitable." He supported a CO₂ tax on fossil fuels and nuclear energy, but criticized nuclear power as out of line with the principles and priorities of sustainable development.

Gro Harlem Brundtland, Prime Minister of Norway, presented what many considered the frankest speech of the morning. She called on all major countries to sign the two UNCED conventions and noted that Norway had reached 0.7% of GNP for ODA more than 15 years ago. She warned that unilateral attitudes toward global problems might turn the global village into a global jungle. Her sharpest criticism was on the lack of democratic decision-making at the international level where the tradition of consensus "can only advance at the pace of the most reluctant mover in each field."

The statement made by Reverend Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide, President of Haiti, drew rousing applause. Aristide called attention to Haiti's ongoing violent political turmoil; slayings for supporting democracy; and the massive destructive environmental consequences. He compared environmental issues with the struggle for democracy stating that environmental pollution is exceeded by even more toxic political pollution; and both the land, through erosion, and political refugees are heading out to sea.

Dr. Luis Alberto Lacalle, President of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay, referred to the duty that nations have to refrain from polluting as well as the right not to be polluted, and that duty flows from laws, and international laws are treaties. Lacalle stated that Uruguay, at the UN General Assembly, will push for nations to draft a treaty to legislate, regulate and punish infractions. Lacalle hoped that nations build on UNCED so that another environment-development conference will not be needed

in another 20 years.

Heads of State from small island states, urgently called for immediate implementation of UNCED conventions and Agenda 21, stating that the very survival of their people, culture and islands depends on the action of nations, especially around those practices that are causing global warming.

In a charged speech, Malaysia's Prime Minister, Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad, refuted the assumption that population is a cause of environmental degradation. Disillusioned with the inequities and historical patterns of development, he criticized the Conference for watering down the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21 on the insistence by "the powerful and the rich".

THE SUMMIT ROUNDTABLE

Heads of State or Government gathered yesterday for a one-hour roundtable discussion. This was the largest gathering of world leaders around a single table in the history of international diplomacy. While there was no discussion per se, five Heads of State delivered formal statements on behalf of their regional groups. The President of Botswana, Sir Ketumile Masire, spoke on behalf of the African Group. He referred specifically to: the need for prompt and effective implementation of Agenda 21; the problems of global trade imbalances and the need to remove tariff and non-tariff barriers; and quick-start for negotiation of a desertification convention. Masire called on leaders to seize the opportunity to commit to fundamental change.

Pakistani Prime Minister Mohammad Nawaz Sharif spoke on behalf of the Asian States. His speech was particularly noteworthy in the virtual absence of criticism regarding Conference outcomes. He did, however, call for the creation of an ecologically and socially just world order that would have as its primary objective, the eradication of poverty. Bulgarian President Zhelyu Zhelev spoke on behalf of the East European group. He referred notably to the devastating effects of the communist system on both the human spirit and the natural environment. As well, he stated that the bitter experience with communism affirmed the extent to which social and economic development can only be achieved if there is harmony with the natural world.

Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari spoke on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean States. He said that in order to rationally use the natural resources of the region, Latin American and Caribbean states require free access to other markets; renegotiation of foreign debt; access to clean technologies; and an acceleration of integration in the region.

Franz Vranitzky, Federal Chancellor of Austria, spoke on behalf of the Western Europe and Others Group. His statement was the most hard-hitting, challenging fellow leaders to some rather difficult questions: are we sufficiently creative and courageous in our decisions; have we really accepted as a basis for future decisions, that current patterns of consumption and production are unsustainable; have we mandated our delegations to negotiate on the understanding that our future can only be a shared and common one; and have we considered the increasing imbalances among peoples and regions of this world? He called for courage in political leadership to recognize that our common future demands an equitable sharing of the world's wealth.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

The final meeting of the UNCED Plenary convenes this morning at 10:00 am. There are three items on the agenda: adoption of agreements on environment and development; adoption of the report of the Conference; and Closure of the Conference. The first item will take the form of adoption of a three-paragraph resolution. The first paragraph of the draft resolution notes that the Climate Change and Biodiversity Conventions were open for signature at the Conference; the second states that the Conference adopts the text of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, Agenda 21 and the Statement of Forest Principles; and the third recommends to the General Assembly that it endorse these three documents at its 47th session. This resolution will be distributed to each State and then will be signed by the Heads of State, Government or Delegation. If all goes according to schedule, the Conference should come to a close at 1:00 pm. All in all, it is expected to be a simple conclusion to a complicated Conference.