



CSD INTERSESSIONAL WORKING GROUP: WEDNESDAY, 1 MARCH 2000

The Intersessional AHWG met in the afternoon to consider the Co-Chairs' initial draft Summary of the Discussion on Integrated Planning and Management of Land Resources and Possible Elements for a Draft Decision by CSD-8. Delegates spent the morning reviewing the drafts after they were distributed at 10:00 am.

CO-CHAIRS' DRAFT SUMMARY OF THE AHWG DISCUSSION ON LAND RESOURCES

The following is an outline of the Co-Chairs' Summary of the AHWG discussions on Integrated Planning and Management of Land Resources.

The Summary has sections on land degradation, management systems, and regional and international cooperation. On land degradation, it notes the importance of reducing and eradicating poverty and hunger when addressing threatened ecosystems and land productivity. This section also reviews discussion on: soil protection, the lack of adequate technologies, information, training and finance, and the identification of critical areas of land degradation. On land management systems, the Summary highlights the need for transparent and participatory decision making, improved security of land tenure, and access to land for vulnerable groups. Other paragraphs refer to mountain resources, information systems, sustainable urban planning and urban sprawl, the challenges facing economies in transition (EITs), and coordination issues. On regional and international cooperation, the Summary discusses: regional strategies and transboundary impacts; support for the transfer of environmentally sound technologies, capacity building, monitoring in developing countries and finance; trade liberalization; international initiatives, notably the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD); and declining levels of Official Development Assistance (ODA).

CO-CHAIRS' POSSIBLE ELEMENTS FOR A DRAFT DECISION ON LAND RESOURCES

The following is a summary of the Co-Chairs' preliminary paper setting out Possible Elements for a Draft Decision on Integrated Planning and Management of Land Resources for CSD-8.

Introduction: This section stresses that activities on integrated planning and management of land resources operate in a holistic manner.

Priorities For Future Work: Noting that the CSD's next comprehensive discussion on integrated planning and management of land resources will occur at the 2002 review of Agenda 21, this section

identifies priority areas for future work: prevention or mitigation of land degradation; land tenure; critical sectors and issues; participation and international cooperation for capacity building and technology transfer.

Prevention or Mitigation of Land Degradation: This section encourages governments to: implement the CCD and to provide additional support for the CCD's Global Mechanism; promote soil protection; designate or strengthen national institutional frameworks for the coordination of land policies; and promote land-use indicators.

Land Tenure: In this section, governments are encouraged to implement laws guaranteeing property rights and improved access to land and security of tenure, particularly for disadvantaged groups.

Critical Sectors and Issues: This section urges governments to: implement the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) and the International Forum on Forests (IFF) proposals for action; adequately plan and manage land resources in mountainous areas; provide for the conservation of wetlands; implement preventive strategies to deal with natural disasters; and take account of land-use interdependencies between rural and urban areas.

Participation: In this section, governments are urged to develop or strengthen frameworks for effective stakeholder participation.

International Cooperation for Capacity Building and Technology Transfer: This section urges governments to: fulfill their financial commitments as set out in Chapter 33 of Agenda 21; strengthen international cooperation on sustainable land management promote technology transfer for capacity building; promote research, awareness raising and training; and take account of the complementarities between UNCED Conventions and relevant instruments.

AHWG DISCUSSION ON THE CO-CHAIRS' INITIAL DRAFT SUMMARY AND ELEMENTS FOR A POSSIBLE CSD-8 DECISION ON LAND RESOURCES

Co-Chair McDonnell (Ireland) opened the meeting of the AHWG in the afternoon and invited delegates to comment on his initial drafts on Integrated Planning and Management of Land Resources.

COMMENTS ON DRAFT SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

On the draft Summary, the G-77/CHINA noted that the undue burden of implementation was placed on developing countries as the issue of finance for implementation had not been dealt with adequately. He also noted the absence of reference to major financial institutions. The EU recalled comments at the AHWG on Tuesday, 29 February, that the CCD had received practically no support from the international community. He noted that 12 African countries had



completed national action programmes to combat desertification, supported by the donor community, including the EU. He said the EU was committed to supporting the CCD Global Mechanism. The G-77/CHINA repeated that inadequate resources were available for desertification. The US proposed a reference to the “responsibilities” that accompany land tenure. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION introduced a new paragraph on ensuring equal access to land resources for all stakeholders when undertaking land tenure reform. The G-77/CHINA noted the need to accommodate cultural and traditional approaches to land tenure. JAPAN noted that not all AHWG participants wished to be associated with the observation that ODA has been declining.

COMMENTS ON POSSIBLE ELEMENTS FOR A DRAFT CSD-8 DECISION ON LAND RESOURCES

Introduction: The G-77/CHINA suggested that references to population pressures, resource degradation, conflict, and food security should be placed in separate paragraphs. The EU requested that the text reflect the importance of: the social and health aspects of land use, cross-border planning policies, the role of local authorities, domestic sources of finance, and access to information. The US noted the importance of collaborative monitoring systems, data sharing and international cooperation on developing policy and educational material. AUSTRALIA asked for an emphasis on participatory decision making, with references to the UNCED Conventions and other related international instruments. MEXICO underlined the need to include socio-economic conditions in holistic land management, and CANADA highlighted the ecosystem approach. INDONESIA underlined the importance of implementation.

Priorities for Future Work: The EU suggested adding reference to ecosystems, urban-rural interactions, and access to information. He requested the deletion of references to capacity building and technology transfer. The US and the RUSSIAN FEDERATION asked for more explicit prioritization of “access to land and security of tenure”. On international cooperation, the US suggested the addition of “information sharing,” while CANADA added “informed decision making.” MEXICO recommended “international frameworks” as an additional priority area. The G-77/CHINA stressed financial resources.

Prevention or Mitigation of Land Degradation: The G-77/CHINA emphasized the responsibility of developed countries and international organizations for addressing land degradation. The EU, with the US, suggested additional references to UN agencies, while the RUSSIAN FEDERATION emphasized the UN regional commissions. TURKEY suggested stronger language on the UN’s role in preventing land degradation. The EU proposed that the CCD be addressed separately, and suggested reference to prevention of natural disasters and monitoring systems. EGYPT preferred a reference to soil “conservation” rather than “protection.”

Land Tenure: The G-77/CHINA emphasized the importance of culture and tradition in developing land tenure policies. The EU supported a US proposal for a reference to “unfettered” land tenure and access. Emphasizing the importance of land cadastrals, the RUSSIAN FEDERATION proposed a new paragraph.

Critical Sectors and Issues: On the title of this section, the EU, supported by the REPUBLIC OF KOREA, suggested the alternative, “Critical Resources and Ecosystems” and MEXICO suggested “Critical Zones and Issues.” On biodiversity, the G-77/CHINA added text on the Biosafety Protocol and the need to explore the health and environmental aspects of biotechnology before marketing products. The EU also suggested reference to the Biosafety Protocol. MEXICO focused on biological resources in “zones of poverty, high biodiversity and indigenous peoples.” On deforestation, the G-77/CHINA suggested urging governments and the international community to implement proposals from the IFF. The US asked that governments be urged to implement the outcomes of the IFF and relevant international instruments in a coordinated manner, and, with the REPUBLIC OF KOREA, RUSSIAN FEDERATION and INDONESIA, he suggested the subsection title be changed to Forests. INDONESIA sought clear

identification of the international instruments that should be signed, ratified or implemented. The G-77/CHINA proposed a new subsection on Desertification. The EU asked for a subsection on Arid Land. On mountain areas, SWITZERLAND, with the support of KYRGYZSTAN and the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, highlighted the importance of local communities. On areas under threat, the EU suggested referring to other fragile ecosystems. The US recommended changing the title to “Wetlands and Coastal Areas.” EGYPT suggested reference to “irrigated agricultural lands”. On natural disasters, the G-77/CHINA recommended adding reference to the formulation of preventive strategies by the “international community”, and the EU suggested reference to the remedial work of UNEP and the UNDP. On urban-rural interactions, the EU introduced a subsection on integrated planning and local authorities. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION underlined the need for an integrated approach.

Participation: The EU suggested that this section’s title should be changed to include “access to information,” while the US suggested reference to “stakeholder participation.” NEW ZEALAND supported both proposals. The US, opposed by VENEZUELA, preferred referring to indigenous “groups” rather than “peoples.” VENEZUELA and the EU suggested reference to indigenous “communities.”

International Cooperation for Capacity Building and Technology Transfer: On the document’s description of this priority area, the REPUBLIC OF KOREA suggested removing reference to capacity building and technology transfer, while CANADA recommended inclusion of “informed decision making.” The G-77/CHINA emphasized the role of the international community and developed countries in providing financial assistance and technology transfer, and urged participation at CSD-8 by financial institutions. The Group suggested that reference to certification be limited to research. The EU underlined the importance of domestic resources and suggested introducing a call on the international community to support the Global Mechanism of the CCD and to ratify the Kyoto Protocol. JAPAN suggested limiting Agenda 21 reference to planning and land management.

ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

Co-Chair McDonnell announced that the Co-Chairs’ Drafts on agriculture would be available on Thursday at 10:00 am, and discussion on these Drafts would begin in the afternoon.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Debates within and between European capitals over appropriate responses to the inclusion of the Freedom Party in the Austrian Government, have spilled over into discussions on the WEOG nominee for Co-Chair of the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Energy and Sustainable Development, Irene Freudenschuss-Reichl (Austria). With opposition to the nomination expected from at least two EU members with particular domestic sensitivities to the complexion of the new Austrian administration, some observers are anticipating a vote to confirm or reject the Austrian and Iranian candidatures for Co-Chairs at Monday’s opening meeting of the Group of Experts. There is intense frustration within some European and other delegations who are keen to point out that Freudenschuss-Reichl is a WEOG rather than an EU nominee, and that she is a highly qualified candidate for the “technical” position of Co-Chair. While a vote on Monday may prove to be a foregone conclusion in the likely absence of alternative candidates, observers are already commenting on the significant impact on the quality of preparations for CSD-9’s energy agenda if Freudenschuss-Reichl’s candidature should fall at this late stage.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

AHWG DISCUSSION ON AGRICULTURE: The Intersessional AHWG will reconvene in Conference Room 4 at 3:00 pm to discuss the Co-Chairs’ initial Summary and Possible Elements for a Decision on Agriculture. The draft papers will be available at 10:00 am in Conference Room 4.