



CSD-11 HIGHLIGHTS: WEDNESDAY, 7 MAY 2003

Delegates convened in two parallel working groups in the morning and afternoon to continue negotiating the Chair's draft decision on the future programme, organization and methods of work of the Commission. Working Group I discussed the CSD's multi-year work programme and the future organization of work, while Working Group II considered reporting, partnerships, and the bureau. In the morning, participants also convened for a presentation on the International Year of Freshwater, while informal consultations took place in the morning and afternoon to finalize the draft decision on the preparations for the 10-year review of the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA).

WORKING GROUP I

At the opening of Working Groups I and II, CSD-11 Chair Moosa drew attention to the tight deadline facing delegates, informing them that the session must finish by Friday afternoon, and that negotiations must be concluded on Thursday. Stating that ministers attending last week's high-level segment had "wanted to show that multilateralism is on track and has not broken down," he urged delegates to demonstrate greater urgency in their work.

MULTI-YEAR PROGRAMME OF WORK: Regarding the paragraph addressing the three main themes of poverty, consumption and production, and the natural resource base, the G-77/CHINA expressed its preference for deleting it, or rewording it using exact language from the JPOI. Deletion was supported by several delegations, on the understanding that if retained, the thrust of the text would be reflected in the preamble. Co-Chair Moeini Meybodi requested Ngurah Swajaya (Indonesia) to facilitate informal consultations on the preamble.

Regarding text on considerations that will guide the implementation of the CSD's work programme, the G-77/CHINA suggested replacing it with its proposal on the multi-year programme of work. Other delegations explained their amendments to the paragraph, and several countries suggested moving parts of the text to the preamble. While a number of delegations proposed amendments to the original annex, the G-77/CHINA noted some fundamental differences between country positions, adding that he preferred a comprehensive cluster approach that embraced all issues rather than a "pick and choose" approach focused on a limited list. Other delegations disagreed, stressing the need to limit the number of issues discussed by CSD sessions. They also noted that ministers had expressed a desire to focus on water and energy in the first two cycles.

FUTURE ORGANIZATION OF WORK: On text addressing the contribution of the CSD's organization of work to the implementation of sustainable development, the G-77/CHINA, opposed by NORWAY, SWITZERLAND, AUSTRALIA, the US and EU, called for a reference to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. The working group agreed that the Commission's work will be organized as a series of two-year action oriented "Implementation Cycles," with a "Review Session" and "Policy Session."

Delegates then discussed the Secretary-General's State of Implementation Report, agreeing to a proposal from CANADA that it reflect progress on the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, and the JPOI. The EU, opposed by the G-77/CHINA, proposed that the report present a detailed review of implementation "at all levels." The G-77/CHINA also objected to language suggesting that the report reflect on new challenges and opportunities. There was general agreement that the report would be based on information provided in countries' reports as well as reports from UN organizations and regions. However, there was a lengthy and inconclusive discussion on the use of the words "*inter alia*" and "as appropriate" when referring to information to be provided by subregions and Major Groups. The G-77/CHINA opposed a proposal by the US that partnership reports be included.

Delegations also agreed that the evaluation of progress in the "Review Session" should include contributions from UN agencies, programmes and funds, the GEF, and international financial and trade institutions.

On contributions from Major Groups, delegations accepted language proposed by Co-Chair Meybodi and amended by the G-77/CHINA, which referred to scientific experts and educators, "bearing in mind" the relevant paragraphs of the JPOI.

Delegates then addressed the outcome of the "Review Session," and agreed that it should include a Chair's summary. On text proposing an Intergovernmental Action Forum, the REPUBLIC OF KOREA proposed that it should be held in February in the second year of a cycle; it also bracketed reference to the Forum's "two weeks" duration. Together with the EU and G-77/CHINA, it voiced concern over the imbalance in the number of meetings in the two year cycle of work. JAPAN reminded the Secretariat of its request that delegates be briefed on the budgetary implications of the various proposals regarding the schedule of meetings.

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WORKING GROUP II

Working Group II continued negotiating the Chair's draft decision, which had been further revised in a compilation text incorporating the outcome of discussions held on Tuesday. Following a brief discussion of various proposals to amend the title of one section, delegates agreed to remove all section titles from the draft.

PARTNERSHIPS: The G-77/CHINA proposed text for a preamble at the beginning of this section. The EU agreed to this, while AUSTRALIA, CANADA, the US and JAPAN objected. Delegates then discussed a paragraph reiterating that partnerships are an important complementary instrument to enhance implementation of Agenda 21 and the JPOI. The G-77/CHINA introduced language clarifying that "partnerships are not intended to substitute commitments made by governments, but to supplement the implementation of JPOI." The US supported referring to "intergovernmental agreements" rather than "commitments." The EU proposed "other intergovernmentally agreed commitments." The group agreed to hold informal consultations on this issue, and to report back on Thursday.

There was also disagreement over a proposal by the G-77/CHINA to delete reference to partnerships being a "key innovation," and to refer to them as "voluntary initiatives undertaken by stakeholders" instead. Responding to new amendments proposed by the G-77/CHINA, the US expressed concern at considering new paragraphs at this late stage in negotiations.

REPORTING: Delegates devoted considerable attention to a paragraph emphasizing the importance of a reporting system for evaluating progress in implementation. Much of the debate focused on whether to retain references to "an effective system" of reporting, which was preferred by the EU, and also on including language on "evaluating and monitoring." Following extensive discussions, delegates approved text emphasizing that "an effective system of reporting is essential for reviewing, evaluating and monitoring progress" in implementation. Delegates also agreed to an EU proposal that the paragraph should refer to relevant parts of the JPOI, and to a US proposal to include a specific reference to identifying actions, opportunities, and constraints.

The working group then discussed a paragraph on reporting to the CSD, starting with text proposed by the G-77/CHINA. Following amendments by the EU and US to this text, language was accepted that "encourages countries to present, on a voluntary basis, national reports, in particular to the Review Session of the CSD, focusing on concrete progress in implementation, including achievements, constraints, challenges and opportunities."

Regarding other text and additional proposals on reporting, delegates expressed uncertainty over whether these related specifically to reporting to the CSD, or to the report of the Secretary-General. Co-Chair Bruno Stagno indicated that the group would return to this text on Thursday morning.

Regarding a paragraph that refers to various reporting-related requests of the Secretariat, delegates agreed to text on avoiding an "unnecessary burden on States" in reporting, and on providing information highlighting relevant trends, constraints, challenges and emerging issues. The EU, opposed by the G-77/CHINA, proposed promoting best practices and benchmarks. The US stressed the UN Development Group's role in coordinating development work within the UN. However, no agreement was reached on this matter.

BUREAU: Delegates began an initial consideration of the section regarding the Bureau. Comments focused on concerns that a two-year Bureau term would give rise to legal and other complications in light of the three-year tenure of CSD membership. The US proposed deleting this section and drafting a separate decision on the Bureau for ECOSOC consideration.

INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS ON SIDS

Informal consultations on SIDS took place in the morning and afternoon to finalize the draft decision on preparations for the international meeting to review implementation of the BPOA. In order to ensure the high visibility of SIDS issues, the G-77/CHINA stressed its desire to include a three-day preparatory meeting in CSD-12's work programme. The US and JAPAN cautioned against taking decisions on the scope and agenda of CSD-12 that might predetermine the outcome of negotiations in the working groups. Delegates agreed to leave a reference to a "high-level segment" in brackets, pending Working Group I's decision on this issue.

Delegates agreed to reorder several paragraphs to ensure that all reporting for the preparatory process would take into account provisions in General Assembly resolution 57/262 on streamlining reporting. The US proposed language requesting that the Secretary-General work "within existing resources" in the preparatory process, with NEW ZEALAND adding text stating that voluntary contributions are to be used to cover shortfalls, if necessary. Delegates agreed to these suggestions. Following confirmation of the dates and venues for the regional preparatory meetings, delegates approved the draft decision, which will be forwarded to Working Group II for its consideration.

PRESENTATION ON THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF FRESHWATER

This meeting was chaired by Ronnie Kasrils, South Africa's Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry. In his keynote address, Willem Alexander, Crown Prince of the Netherlands, said improving sanitation required a special effort and called for a "new agricultural revolution." Other speakers noted the need for social mobilization and mobilization of the media, gender-sensitive water strategies, and a focus on people, households and communities. Participants also heard reports on the Millennium Project Task Force on Water and Sanitation, the Third World Water Forum, and the World Water Development Report.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Chair Moosa's emphatic appeal to the working groups on Wednesday morning to demonstrate greater urgency in their negotiations appeared to have met with mixed results. While participants in Working Group I initially seemed inspired by his eloquence, some left the meeting late in the afternoon suggesting that talks had somewhat lost their way as the day progressed. Meanwhile, Working Group II began at a pace one delegate referred to as "snail-like," with some participants complaining about the "last minute" introduction of numerous additions to the text by some delegations. While the afternoon session was more productive, there appears to be widespread concern that both groups still have a lot of work to do; indeed, some seemed surprised that there was no night meeting called on Wednesday.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

WORKING GROUP I: This group will meet in Conference Room 4 from 10:00 am - 1:00 pm and 3:00-6:00 pm to negotiate the future organization of work and the multi-year work programme.

WORKING GROUP II: This group will convene in Conference Room 6 from 10:00 am - 1:00 pm and 3:00-6:00 pm to negotiate on partnerships, and on the contributions of the UN system and Major Groups. This group will also consider the draft decisions on SIDS and on fast-tracking WSSD-accredited NGOs to ECOSOC.