

CSD 17 HIGHLIGHTS: THURSDAY, 7 MAY 2009

On Thursday, CSD 17 delegates in Working Group 1 completed their first reading of text on rural development and interlinkages and cross-cutting issues, including means of implementation. They adjourned early to conduct regional and interest group consultations prior to beginning negotiations on Friday morning. Working Group 2 completed its first reading of the Africa section and began negotiating the sections on land and drought.

WORKING GROUP 1

RURAL DEVELOPMENT: The G-77/CHINA offered text, including: development and integration into food markets of small-holder family agriculture; ecosystem conservation through community-based programmes; and empowerment and gender equality in rural areas.

INTERLINKAGES, CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES, INCLUDING MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION: SWITZERLAND proposed greater coherence between and within international processes and institutions having an impact on agriculture, food security and rural development. Ghana, for the G-77/CHINA, stressed that sustainable development should address the social dimension of globalization. JAPAN highlighted the role of human security. The US offered text on the promotion of education and extension related to agriculture. The EU noted the role of education in changing consumer behavior.

CANADA suggested using the term “marginalized” instead of “vulnerable” when evoking certain groups. The US proposed a new paragraph on promoting the role of local authorities in creating vibrant markets for small farmers. The EU added text on ensuring that biodiversity, water and forests provide ecosystem services for achieving the MDGs, and on promoting development or strengthening relevant mechanisms, and on policy consideration of payments to farmers for such services.

The EU reworded language on sustainable consumption and production patterns, highlighting them as an overarching objective and essential requirement of sustainable development, and adding reference to agricultural production and food consumption. AUSTRALIA bracketed text on “developed countries taking the lead” in promoting sustainable production and consumption patterns, and the EU included mention of the Marrakech 10-Year Framework of Programmes to accelerate the shift to sustainable production and consumption, for deliberation at CSD 18 and 19.

The G-77/CHINA proposed deleting “life cycle” approaches, to which SWITZERLAND objected, and the EU included text on reduction of losses of food in a life cycle perspective. The EU, supported by the US, said climate change is not a cross-cutting issue and proposed shifting most of the relevant provisions to the thematic sections. SWITZERLAND offered text on strong partnerships across sectors. The DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO highlighted the efforts of States who have ensured the protection of their forest resources. MEXICO “wondered” whether climate change is a cross-cutting issue and suggested the implementation of adaptation strategies. JAPAN bracketed “biochar” and proposed “reduced or no tillage and organic matter application,” while the US proposed “further research to evaluate” biochar’s potential. The G-77/CHINA and the EU proposed text on the means of implementation. The US noted that the discussion should stay in this section and lamented the unbalanced focus on finance.

The US added “and effective use” to “enhancing availability” of finance for sustainable development, and suggested replacing the paragraph on increasing ODA with a reference to the Monterrey Consensus and Doha Declaration recognizing multiple sources of financing for development and the need for national and international action. The EU proposed language on the essential role of ODA as a complement to other sources.

The EU added “primarily at the national level” to the phrase on creating an enabling environment. It also proposed new wording on enhanced forms of debt restructuring mechanisms based on existing frameworks and principles. JAPAN and AUSTRALIA bracketed text on developing new and innovative sources and methods of finance. NORWAY proposed a new paragraph on establishing transparency in managing external and national financial resources and curbing illegal flight of capital and money laundering. The G-77/CHINA suggested adding mention of “universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable” in regard to the trading system. JAPAN and the EU asked for deletion of the phrase on improved market access for developing countries’ agricultural exports. CANADA replaced elimination of trade distorting subsidies with “substantial reduction of distorting domestic support.”

The US bracketed text on quotas and trade negotiations, calling for greater focus on issues strictly relevant to sustainable development. She noted that these issues are highly sensitive and are being discussed in a different forum, and underscored the importance of building capacity for participatory land-use planning. The EU offered text recognizing the importance of bilateral trade and economic agreements as well as South-South

trade. MEXICO highlighted the effectiveness in the planning and implementation of drought plans. CANADA stressed the need for technologies to reach rural people, including women, youth and children. The G-77/CHINA offered text on the potential of global intellectual property rights for development. On the issue of follow-up of CSD 17, LEBANON proposed mechanisms with, *inter alia*, FAO, IFAD and WFP. AUSTRALIA said a review process would be onerous and resource-intensive.

After Working Group 1 completed its first reading of the negotiating text in the afternoon, the G-77/CHINA requested time for consultation before proceeding with the second reading. Vice-Chair Mbuende announced that negotiations would begin Friday morning, in the same sequence as the first reading.

WORKING GROUP 2

AFRICA: JAPAN suggested encouraging non-Paris Club official bilateral creditors and private creditors to provide comparable relief on Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative terms for eligible outstanding debt, and ensuring the fulfillment of the G-8 Gleneagles commitment. The US proposed reference to helping efforts to achieve MDGs and eradicating poverty. The EU stressed ODA effectiveness in line with Paris Declaration Principles.

The EU proposed the coherent implementation of the Rio Conventions in Africa, and enhancing action on the provision of new and additional financial resources as well as financial and technical support as positive incentives to mitigation strategies and adaptation action for developing countries. Tanzania, for the G-77/CHINA, suggested text on: mobilizing new financial resources including the UNFCCC Adaptation Fund; technical skills for development; support for the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment's (AMCEN) climate change program; and strengthening AMCEN and the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) as regional cooperation mechanisms. He also warned that if other delegations proceed with so many amendments, the G-77/CHINA would present new "counterbalancing" text.

LAND: The text on balancing sustainability, rural livelihoods, and food productivity in land policies and management was approved with a G-77/CHINA reference to social, economic and environmental aspects and the US addition, at the suggestion of a major group, of a reference urbanization. Text on strengthening capacities for implementing an integrated land management approach was agreed after the G-77/CHINA qualified "approach" with "sustainable" and CANADA's proposed reference to "local" capacities was changed to the US-proposed reference to "subnational."

The G-77/CHINA bracketed a US-proposed reference to strengthening "networks" in addition to partnerships to incorporate community goals. Delegates agreed that this incorporation should include traditional knowledge. Delegates agreed to AUSTRALIA's proposal that incentives for SLM should be "science-based, targeted" incentives. The G-77/CHINA amended its proposal for accessibility to technology tools and products to indicate it included tools "such as high resolution satellite imagery," but the EU and the US bracketed the text. The G-77/CHINA withdrew its proposed text calling for improved institutional and legal capacity of developing countries after NORWAY suggested that it include capacity related to land tenure and the US suggested that it refer to "all" countries.

The G-77/CHINA did not accept the EU and US amendment specifying that the utilization of best available technologies be "where appropriate, useful and cost effective," so the paragraph remains in brackets. Consensus was reached, with some

amendments, on paragraphs on establishing and strengthening knowledge management networks and a database of land experts, and on exchange and transfer of information on new and improved technologies and best practices.

Delegates did not agree on texts related to: incentives to reduce land degradation; and conserving and protecting land soil resources. They agreed on texts on implementing policies that address the direct and indirect drivers of land degradation, and on developing capacities and applying new and existing tools and technologies for monitoring soil quality and land degradation.

The G-77/CHINA proposed new subparagraphs on promoting integrated land management and promoting efficient water management. Text was approved on: improving efficiency of irrigation and rainfall harvesting after adding G-77/CHINA amendments on water management practices and using harvested rainwater to address water shortages; coastal erosion and sea-level rise, with G-77/CHINA amendments on using land use planning and climate change adaptation programmes to address the threat and referencing low-lying coastal States and areas; and information dissemination mechanisms regarding land tenure, with a US amendment referencing collaborative knowledge. The Chair's text on saltwater intrusion was approved.

The US agreed to drop its proposal specifying that ensuring pastoralist grazing rights are protected would ensure mobility, which is a prerequisite for viable nomadic and semi-nomadic pastoralists' livelihoods, but NORWAY requested that the proposal be retained. The G-77/CHINA proposed replacing text on land access to the poor with subparagraphs on national efforts to: promote land access for the poor; and combat speculative use of land and land resources and accumulation of land. The G-77/CHINA introduced text on people living under foreign occupation. The EU, US and SWITZERLAND said the G-77/CHINA's proposals on implementation should be moved to the means of implementation section.

DROUGHT: Delegates deleted reference to drought "prevention." They differed over whether to reference: integrated watershed, or water basin, and water resource management (US); IWRM or integrated river basin management (EU); or water resource management (G-77/CHINA). The Chair's text on proactive drought risk management approaches was approved.

IN THE CORRIDORS

CSD participants commented on Thursday that negotiators are using a large computer screen – the main drafting tool for both Working Groups – to its full extent. Some observers had the impression that the method of immediately inputting amendments into the text might also be generating an urge by some participants to fill the screen with the longest possible phrases. Others, while agreeing that the process had the potential to become unwieldy at points, said the procedure made it easier for them to follow their counterparts' proposals, with still others commenting on the possibility to better engage delegates as they both heard and saw the proposals. To some, computer drafting, apart from its obvious advantages, clearly showed the inordinate length of the updated draft (now running around 70 pages).

Apparently, delegates in Working Group 1 heeded the warning issued by Chair Mbuende about an impending "Friday midnight session": on late Thursday afternoon they were seen huddling in Conference Room 4, trying to decide on trade-offs for the next day's negotiating session. An old-time observer noted that a compilation text might be useful at some point, as the time for negotiations is quickly dissipating.