

CSD 17 HIGHLIGHTS: FRIDAY, 8 MAY 2009

On Friday, CSD 17 delegates in Working Group 1 began negotiating the Preamble and section on agriculture, and Working Group 2 negotiated sections on drought and desertification. Delegates convened for an evening Plenary, during which CSD Chair Verburg outlined how the negotiations would proceed during the CSD's second week, and then continued informal negotiations into the night.

WORKING GROUP 1

PREAMBLE: The G-77/CHINA, supported by the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, agreed to the EU proposal to add the words "including, *inter alia*" before mention of principle 7 of the Rio Declaration, but the US, with CANADA, cautioned against picking only one principle. Delegates agreed to incorporate reference to the Brussels Programme of Action for the LDCs in the first paragraph of the Preamble.

CANADA suggested deleting "enhanced" before "means of implementation during this session," and the US and EU suggested deleting reference to means altogether. The G-77/CHINA emphasized that without this reference, the whole text "will be useless."

The US, supported by CANADA, suggested deleting text on "eradicating poverty, particularly in Africa, as the greatest challenge facing the world today." Joined by JAPAN, they also proposed retaining a reaffirmation of the political declaration on Africa's development needs. The G-77/CHINA insisted on keeping original language. The US then suggested, as a compromise, reference to paragraph 6 of the Doha Declaration on financing for development, and on the importance of accelerating sustainable broad-based economic growth, which is pivotal to bringing Africa into the mainstream of the global economy. The G-77/CHINA said it will consult on this proposal.

The paragraph on people living under foreign occupation remained bracketed by the EU, US and JAPAN. Delegates agreed that the paragraph on Principles 2 and 7 of the Rio Declaration should be addressed together with the first paragraph of the preamble.

Delegates agreed on text, including on the Millennium Declaration commitments, with minor changes. The US bracketed text on voluntary guidelines on the right to adequate food, with SWITZERLAND objecting, CANADA reserving its position and the G-77/CHINA offering additional text referencing ODA. On aid effectiveness, the EU supported text by CANADA with added reference to the 2008 Accra Agenda

of Action; the G-77/CHINA moved for deletion and proposed alternative text. SWITZERLAND, CANADA and the US supported the text as amended by the EU. The US noted that aid effectiveness is important, but in reference to the G-77/CHINA's introduced text, said it is important for citations to be balanced. It was suggested to move the two texts to the chapeau on Means of Implementation. The US suggested deleting the EU text on the Madrid High Level Meeting, with the G-77/CHINA offering alternative text.

The G-77/CHINA suggested an addition to CANADA's proposed text on the Doha Round, regarding a commitment to reach an early, ambitious, successful and development-oriented conclusion of trade negotiations. The US, EU and AUSTRALIA supported the original Canadian text. CANADA reworded its text to read: reaffirming commitment to a successful and early conclusion to the WTO Doha Round with an ambitious, balanced and development-oriented outcome, which is urgently needed.

The G-77/CHINA introduced text on the need to increase efforts at national, regional and international levels to address food security, and concern over the current financial crisis and its effect on developing States' ability to secure access to financing. The US objected to the latter, suggesting that the proposed text is not related to sustainability. The US also proposed substituting "sustainable green revolution" with sustainable "agricultural productivity." CANADA supported the US change, noting that discussion about sustainable green revolution is more appropriate in the text rather than the preamble. The EU disagreed. Delegates agreed on text on contribution of, *inter alia*, national reporting and non-negotiated outcomes excluding the reference to the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation: the G-77/CHINA stressed that referencing this process could be read as not valuing other processes. SWITZERLAND offered text referencing the findings of the 2008 World Development Report.

The G-77/CHINA introduced new language reiterating that all measures relating to the sustainable use of biodiversity and sharing of relevant benefits must be consistent with the CBD. A paragraph on the UNCCD was agreed after reference to this convention was replaced with reference to "the three Rio Conventions." The EU, JAPAN and the US bracketed a paragraph on new financial resources, technology transfer and capacity building.

In the final paragraph of the Preamble, where the CSD decides to call upon governments and the UN system, the US suggested ending it with the words "to implement the following recommendations," instead of "taking the responsibility for the implementation." CANADA proposed dropping the word "policy" before measures.

AGRICULTURE: In the chapeau of the agriculture section, the G-77/CHINA, supported by AUSTRALIA and the US, suggested deleting the word “multifunctional” before agriculture, but ISRAEL and SWITZERLAND asked for its retention.

During the evening informal meeting, the G77-CHINA suggested deleting proposals by AUSTRALIA and the US on definitions of agriculture. The US noted the importance of defining the broad range of activities associated with agriculture and moved for the deletion of “ensuring the right to food” as proposed by the G-77/CHINA.

WORKING GROUP 2

DROUGHT: New text by NORWAY was accepted, after G-77/CHINA modifications to reference strategies and say that they should “take into account” rather than “be consistent with” the Hyogo Framework for Action and the MDGs, on integrating climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction into national drought management plans or risk reduction strategies. Text on drought information, forecasting and early warning systems was agreed with modifications to mention global (US), proactive measures (US) and drought observatories (EU). Text on the role of forest management in combating drought, desertification and climate change impacts was approved based on alternative text proposed by the US, with a modification to stress sustainable forest management (G-77/CHINA), and a compromise on “promoting conservation and rehabilitation of vegetation cover” reached between the EU, NORWAY, SWITZERLAND and the G-77/CHINA.

Delegates accepted the US proposal to replace text on monitoring and management of carbon stocks and soil as a carbon sink with a reference to promoting sustainable management of soil organic matter, with the G-77/CHINA’s deletion of “organic matter.” Text on North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation and partnering for capacity-building was agreed with a US amendment with reference to data gathering, information management, modeling and forecasting. The EU and US bracketed text proposed by the G-77/CHINA on mobilizing financial resources to mitigate the effects and to combat drought and calling upon developed countries to fulfill their commitments under the UNCCD, particularly in the provision of adequate, timely and predictable financial resources.

The G-77/CHINA suggested deleting EU-proposed text calling for a strengthened knowledge base on water use and water availability in addition to drought, preferring to keep the focus on drought, but the EU retained the text in brackets. The G-77/CHINA proposed that research and development should “assess and identify,” rather than “quantify,” risk of droughts. Delegates accepted this proposal, using a US-proposed formulation of “research-and-development,” and also agreed to NORWAY’s proposal that these actions would take into account traditional knowledge. The G-77/CHINA objected to the EU proposal that work on indicators and benchmarks should be harmonized with the set of indicators to be developed under the UNCCD, on the basis that these indicators have not been developed, but the EU maintained its proposal in brackets.

Text on drought indices was approved based on G-77/CHINA alternative language drawn from the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) calling for establishing guidelines for drought indices for use in different parts of the world to facilitate the compilation and reporting of drought conditions. Text on increasing knowledge-sharing on weather forecasts and climate conditions was approved with amendments to exchange “relevant key” for “local, regional and global” in describing

stakeholders (G-77/CHINA) and to add text on increasing the capacity to use such information before, during and after drought events (US).

Text proposed by SWITZERLAND on supporting strategies of rural communities to cope with drought was approved with a US-proposed reference to increasing resilience to drought, and the G-77/CHINA’s deletion of “with targeted funding to communities, organizations or NGOs relevant activities.” The paragraph on promoting sustainable land-use practices aimed at combating and adapting to drought was not agreed because the G-77/CHINA could not accept EU proposals to add “where appropriate” after “aimed at” and “climate change and desertification” after “drought.”

Text proposed by the US on promoting globally improved information communication and data sharing, modeling and forecasting capabilities and improved user-based community resilience planning and implementation for rural and other communities was approved with the G-77/CHINA’s references to including indigenous knowledge, and particularly in developing countries.

The paragraph on promoting innovative technical solutions and practices for sustainable water management was not agreed because the G-77/CHINA could not accept the EU’s additions of reference to water-saving systems, sustainable desalinization and water reuse.

The text proposed by the G-77/CHINA on promoting the participation of local communities in combating drought, desertification and land degradation was approved with US-proposed references to mitigating the effects of drought and combating desertification, and NORWAY’s addition of a reference to pastoralists.

PLENARY

CSD delegates convened in Plenary at 5:30 pm, during which they received progress reports on the Working Groups and Chair Verburg described how negotiations would proceed during the second week. Chair Verburg noted that the negotiating text has grown from 17 to 70 pages and commented that, while a farmer would be proud of such a harvest, the CSD should not. She said she and the Bureau would develop a second draft text over the weekend, cleaning up the text and suggesting compromise language where possible, but leaving the issues where further negotiations are needed untouched. The new draft will be made available at 2:00 pm on Sunday and will be presented to the Plenary on Monday at 10:00 am. Negotiations in the Working Groups will resume at 11:00 am Monday.

The G-77/CHINA expressed concern about the process of developing a compilation draft. The EU said a compilation text should reflect the positions that groups have already stated and retain text that has already been agreed. A contact group continued the discussion of what the new draft would contain.

IN THE CORRIDORS

The Friday evening plenary saw some confusion regarding the way to proceed with negotiations. While delegations generally welcomed the prospect of a “cleaned up” second Chair’s draft, to be made available on Sunday, the G-77/China statement that it was coming too early was privately shared by several participants. They felt unease that some important country proposals could be lost in a well-intended compilation effort, and suggested that more time was needed to try to resolve differences, including in informal consultations. A meeting of interest groups following the Plenary was reported to have reached an understanding that the Chair would identify areas for possible consolidation of similar ideas and highlight key areas of disagreement.