

CSD 17 HIGHLIGHTS: TUESDAY, 12 MAY 2009

On Tuesday, CSD 17 delegates continued negotiating draft decisions in two Working Groups throughout the day and into the night. Delegates also convened in standing-room-only dialogues with Major Groups during the morning, and the policy research community during the afternoon.

WORKING GROUP 1

AGRICULTURE: The G-77/CHINA expressed deep concern with the negotiation process, stating that some States are not willing to engage constructively. On the development and implementation of food security strategies, JAPAN stressed the importance of regional strategies while the EU said the focus should remain on national ones. CANADA suggested moving the text on the 2004 FAO Voluntary Guidelines to the Preamble. The EU said the reference to the Guidelines is more appropriate in the section on agriculture. On food procurement, the EU said it should be discussed with other trade provisions. AUSTRALIA supported retaining the existing paragraph in the section on agriculture.

Delegates discussed rapid response to humanitarian situations, including food stockholding, where bracketed alternative language remains. The G-77/CHINA proposed reference to “according to national circumstances” in text on national food security reserves. Discussion was deferred on text calling for strengthening the international community’s response to the global food crisis and longer-term support to agriculture.

On the EU-proposed promotion of a Global Partnership for Agriculture and Food Security, the US and G-77/CHINA suggested consolidating it in a preambular paragraph. AUSTRALIA, the US and EU proposed deleting references to “oversight” of food commodity and futures markets, and using the word “understand” instead of “limit” the impacts of speculation. The US suggested that a small group tackle the issue, and Co-Chair Mbuende concurred.

The EU and US contested the G-77/CHINA-proposed paragraph on providing greater financial resources to the WFP, and suggested recognizing the important role of the three Rome-based agencies instead. The G-77/CHINA welcomed US language to “encourage donor support to international organizations, including the WFP,” but the EU objected. CANADA proposed language on increasing the nutritional content of food, and the G-77/CHINA promised to come back to it.

INTERLINKAGES, CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION: In the paragraph on coherence of international processes and institutions, the G-77/CHINA bracketed reference to the UN High Level Task Force

on the Global Food Security Crisis, FAO, WFP and IFAD. The paragraph on the three Rio Conventions was deleted. Delegates agreed on the paragraph on qualifiers for policy options and practical measures. Differences persisted on whether to retain a reference to the MDG on poverty and hunger in this section. Co-Chair Mbuende announced an afternoon meeting of a group of interested delegations, facilitated by Canada, to discuss trade-related issues.

In the paragraph on national sustainable development strategies addressing the three pillars of sustainable development, the EU added text on international migration, stakeholder engagement and strategic assessment of such strategies. The G-77/CHINA questioned “strategic assessment,” and suggested deleting reference to “human security,” as proposed by JAPAN. The paragraph was left in brackets. In a paragraph on diseases, the EU objected to the insertion by the G-77/CHINA of “communicable.”

The G-77/CHINA said talking about access is appropriate when education is free. Delegates agreed on strengthening international capacity-building initiatives that assess health and environmental linkages. CANADA supported a reference to “marginalized” minorities, but MEXICO said a reference to “vulnerable” groups is more appropriate. Delegates agreed on “vulnerable” rather than “marginalized” and kept “minorities” in brackets.

Delegates agreed on paragraphs on: empowering rural women; strengthening the human resource and institutional capacity of SIDS and Africa; and promoting the role of local authorities. The paragraph on changing unsustainable patterns of production and consumption was extensively discussed, but remained bracketed. Co-Chair Raguz suggested that two contact groups meet to develop compromise language: the EU and G-77/China on the paragraph to ensure that biodiversity, land, water and forests provide ecosystem services, and the US, Switzerland and the G-77/China on the paragraph on promoting the development of ecosystem services, especially strategies of increased policy coherence.

WORKING GROUP 2

RURAL DEVELOPMENT: Regarding the chapeau, text was agreed on: achieving the MDGs as central to sustainable development (G-77/CHINA); coordinating efforts at global, regional, national and local levels, and rural development strategies taking into consideration the remoteness and potential in rural areas and providing targeted differentiated approaches (G-77/CHINA); referencing “agriculture sector” instead of “agriculture” (US, CANADA); and referencing agriculture as an important foundation of rural development (CANADA). Delegates discussed but did not remove all brackets from an EU proposal on effective participation and empowerment of rural

communities, due to G-77/CHINA concerns about its reference to a “bottom-up approach,” and a reference to eradicating poverty, which the US proposed should refer to eradicating “extreme poverty.”

The G-77/CHINA agreed to CANADA’s proposal to highlight the potential for “sustainable” management of natural resources. The EU bracketed the G-77/CHINA proposal that this sustainable management should also extend to “agricultural waste.” Delegates agreed to a G-77/CHINA proposal to call for promoting pro-poor planning and budgeting at national and local levels. Delegates adopted a G-77/CHINA proposal on social protection programmes with a modification by MEXICO to replace “disabled” with “persons with disabilities.”

The G-77/CHINA bracketed an EU proposal to add “in particular women’s rights” after the G-77/CHINA-proposed reference to land tenure supported by a legal framework that protects families. The G-77/CHINA bracketed a reference to inheritance rights in the same subparagraph. Delegates agreed to MEXICO’s proposal to call for support to harmonize modern technologies with traditional and indigenous knowledge for rural development, with a US amendment to indicate that it be “sustainable” rural development. Delegates added a new G-77/CHINA proposal calling for protecting and ensuring sustainable use of traditional knowledge for the management of natural resources.

The US, EU and CANADA objected to the G-77/CHINA-proposed reference to “consistent with national legislation” in text on participation of vulnerable groups in the elaboration of local and national planning of rural development. In the subparagraph on supporting training and capacity building of rural communities to effectively implement adaptation programmes to climate change at the local level, the EU added “and mitigation” following “adaptation.”

The EU proposed deleting text proposed by the G-77/CHINA on investing new resources in research aimed at adapting to climate change, and JAPAN suggested moving it to the section on crossing-cutting issues. The G-77/CHINA will consider JAPAN’s proposal. The EU proposed deleting reference to “in accordance with national legislation” in text on fostering and strengthening capacities of rural communities for self-organization for building social capital.

Delegates agreed to G-77/CHINA-proposed text calling for the creation and development of educational programmes for rural communities aimed at disease prevention. In a subparagraph on education, the G-77/CHINA proposed calling for free primary education and access to secondary and tertiary educational opportunities, as well as vocational and entrepreneurship training, including proactive and market related elements to build capacities within rural communities, in particular for youth, young girls, women and indigenous people. The text was agreed with an EU-placed bracket around “ensure free.”

DIALOGUE OF MINISTERS WITH MAJOR GROUPS

Ministers from Namibia, Jordan, Nigeria and Guatemala, State Secretary from Mongolia, and representatives from 9 Major Groups as well as from UNEP, UNIDO, WMO and IFAD participated in the Ministerial Dialogue with Major Groups and the UN System. CSD Chair Verburg opened the session highlighting the need for a green revolution, especially in Africa, and said sustainable development could only be achieved with the involvement of all stakeholders focusing on concrete measures and action. Assistant Secretary-General Rachel Mayanja said public participation in decision-making is a fundamental prerequisite for the success of sustainable development.

In their presentations and the discussion, Major Group representatives highlighted, *inter alia*: involving the Major Groups in decision-making processes at all levels; empowerment

of women, small farmers and indigenous peoples; securing land tenure and rights to land, food and water, particularly for women, indigenous peoples and other vulnerable groups; food sovereignty; the ecosystem approach; traditional and indigenous knowledge and technologies; creation of an enabling environment for drought preparedness and mitigation; education and training; the important role of local authorities; public-private partnerships; capacity building, scientific research and knowledge sharing; rural-urban linkages; and equal access of developing countries’ agricultural products to the world market. Ministers and representatives from governments and UN agencies highlighted the important role played by the Major Groups, and committed to develop partnerships with them in implementing the CSD’s decisions.

DIALOGUE OF MINISTERS WITH POLICY RESEARCH COMMUNITY

Representatives from governments, Major Groups, UNDP, UNEP, UNIDO and IFAD participated in the Ministerial Dialogue with the Policy Research Community. CSD Chair Verburg opened by stressing the need to link science and research with application and policymaking. Assistant Secretary-General Jomo Kwame Sundaram said recent multiple crises should lead us to reassess how sustainable development best moves forward. Four invited speakers from the policy research community reflected on: the future of the sustainable development agenda; how best to develop that agenda; the sustainable green revolution; and how to deal with the food crisis.

During the dialogue, the participants discussed, *inter alia*: the establishment of a broad-based knowledge management partnership on sustainable development; a “wiring diagram” for the next 20 years of the sustainable development process that includes agreed criteria, accountability mechanisms, appropriate incentives and the capacity for resilience and adjustment; how extremes of affluence and poverty both have major economic impacts on the environment; inconvenient choices that need to be made about unsustainable consumption and lifestyles; the Copenhagen meeting on climate change as a litmus test of the sustainable development process; and inclusion of agriculture in the next climate change agreement. One speaker suggested that high-level executive leadership will be required to improve agriculture, along with the recognition that it is a knowledge-intensive sector and needs entrepreneurial activity and investment in basic infrastructure. Participants also discussed how cities, their procurement choices and their consumers can play a leadership role in helping agriculture, and how solving the food crisis requires long-term measures involving many stakeholders, which is not usually politically attractive.

IN THE CORRIDORS

As delegates prepared for the final three days of CSD 17, during which they expected to be stretched thin between High-level events and continued negotiations, several delegates commented on the state of the draft text, the significant substantive differences that remain, its length, and the snail’s pace at which negotiations are taking place. One participant noted that, even when a paragraph is agreed, the problem of locating and eliminating duplicative language presents another hurdle. Other delegates expressed concern that the draft reads “more like an instruction manual, than a policy option document.” Several delegates intimated that it might be time for the Chair to take a bold step and submit a new, “very short” version of the negotiating text, incorporating the most important provisions. Some indicated that an evening meeting of the Chair with regional group representatives discussed increasing the number of small contact groups to resolve contentious paragraphs.