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CSD INTERSESSIONAL WORKING GROUP THURSDAY, 6 MARCH 1997

Members of the G-77/China met during the morning and the Working Group met during the afternoon to discuss Areas Requiring Urgent Action. Co-Chair Osborn noted that the annex regarding the CSD's programme of work would not be discussed at the Intersessional, and proposed attaching the Secretariat's text on this issue to the final report.

AREAS REQUIRING URGENT ACTION

ICELAND supported the identification of five or six areas for action, including oceans, energy and transport, freshwater, toxic chemicals and SIDS. NORWAY supported a focus on a smaller number of issues.

A number of speakers suggested that the text on poverty be included in the section on Policy Approaches. GUYANA called for identification of national and international actors. The G-77/CHINA proposed adding references to support for micro-enterprises and rural employment. The INDIGENOUS PEOPLES CAUCUS called for full implementation of the WSSD Programme of Action. CANADA recommended inclusion of food security and promotion of gender equality.

On freshwater, the US questioned the need for an intergovernmental process. CANADA supported the call for international cooperation and an intergovernmental process. AUSTRALIA said a time frame should be specified for an intergovernmental panel. SWITZERLAND proposed attention to regional approaches, upstream-downstream linkages and, with PERU, sustainable development of mountain areas. The G-77/CHINA, supported by the INDIGENOUS PEOPLES CAUCUS, said discussing water as an economic good, and thus the reference to pricing policies to recover costs, is premature. He said bilateral and regional agreements will be more effective and feasible than international cooperation and an intergovernmental process. He called for financial and technical support for water supply and sanitation infrastructure in developing countries. BRAZIL underscored the important role of international financial institutions in helping developing countries in this regard. FAO called for promotion of investment in upland conservation. GUYANA said waste management is linked to this matter and inefficient industrial practices should be referenced. URUGUAY stressed the need for an integrated approach.

On oceans, the US questioned the need for an improved system of oceans governance and said FAO is already addressing the issue of excess fishing fleet capacity. JAPAN and the REPUBLIC OF KOREA said the subparagraph on elimination of subsidies and excess capacity should be deleted. BRAZIL noted considerable differences among countries regarding subsidies and fishing fleet capacity and recommended that their elimination and reduction be conducted "where appropriate." AUSTRALIA supported an exhaustive list of existing legal instruments and action programmes. She supported targets provided they are based on indicators of ecological sustainability. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA said the listing of legal instruments should be deleted or be comprehensive. The G-77/CHINA said implementation of these instruments should be based on common but differentiated responsibilities and requires assistance to developing countries. CANADA said that specific proposals for an intergovernmental process on oceans are premature. MALTA supported the reference to the Global Programme of Action for SIDS. MEXICO, NORWAY and FAO called for a reference to the 1995 International Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. NORWAY noted the importance of national and regional efforts to ensure sustainable use and supported: reference to the FAO agreement to promote compliance on the high seas; the establishment of measures and objectives, including targets for fisheries management; and improved control and enforcement mechanisms. Samoa, on behalf of AOSIS, supported adding "seas" to the heading and stressed the link between implementation and financial and organizational capacities of countries. PAPUA NEW GUINEA called for reflection on biological and physical oceans processes.

On forests, CANADA proposed including the three options for an ongoing international process recommended by the IPF in the UNGASS document.

On energy and transport, JAPAN said energy pricing should reflect a country's economic and energy situation and the reference to nuclear energy should be deleted. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA suggested deleting the subparagraph on subsidies. ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA said SIDS have placed priority on energy issues. SWITZERLAND said the possibility of behavioral changes on the demand side should be considered. The G-77/CHINA said the time frame and targets for elimination of subsidies should account for differences between developed and developing countries. He called for a doubling of financial resources for new and renewable energy sources and for access to technologies and know-how to enable developing countries to use these energy sources. CANADA called for greater emphasis on energy efficiency and the benefits of

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recycling. BRAZIL recommended mentioning the role of international financial institutions in providing electricity to unserved populations. He questioned the usefulness of a specific uniform target for elimination of subsidies. The US indicated it was not ready for a target. MALTA called for references to increased investment in solar energy and to regional R&D in renewable energy. The NGO ENERGY CAUCUS called for: energy conservation and use reduction in developed countries; a phase-out of subsidies for fossil fuel and nuclear energy; and an increase in renewable energy subsidies. NORWAY proposed a reference to renewable energy sources available locally and supported a separate paragraph on transport with a reference to comprehensive land-use planning. A number of countries also supported separating energy and transport.

On atmosphere, the US proposed adding a reference to regional agreements. JAPAN proposed moving the recommendation regarding COP-3 of the FCCC to the Statement of Commitment. The G-77/CHINA stressed the need for technology transfer and financial assistance to developing countries to enable them to meet FCCC commitments. He said the development and management of terrestrial and marine carbon sinks does not give developed countries license to maintain unsustainable practices. CANADA proposed welcoming the recent conclusion of meetings on replenishment of the Montreal Protocol Fund rather than calling for additional resources for phasing out ozone depleting substances in developing countries. BRAZIL proposed noting that the FCCC commitments have not been met and that there is a need for renewed effort by industrialized countries. IRAN said UNGASS should avoid making recommendations for further commitments. AOSIS called on Annex I countries to reduce their greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and to strengthen their commitments. The NGO ENERGY CAUCUS emphasized equity and the primary responsibility of industrialized countries in reducing GHGs. The INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY ASSOCIATION stressed the need for countries to make well-informed decisions on the optimal mix of energy sources, and called for sound technological assessments of the risks of all energy sources.

On population, the G-77/CHINA said expanding basic education must reflect the needs of women and the girl-child. CANADA recommended expanding family planning.

On education, the US indicated an interest in the education for life idea. EGYPT supported references to training and public awareness. CANADA advocated inclusion of education for sustainable development. MALTA recommended emphasizing educational systems that include environmental programmes.

On health, the US supported a reference to WHO and the need to protect children from environmental threats. CANADA suggested mentioning WSSD follow-up activities and highlighting the link between health and the environment.

On toxic chemicals and wastes, AUSTRALIA proposed specifying the precautionary principle, as contained in Rio Principle 15. SWITZERLAND called for more concrete language regarding PIC and POPs negotiations. The G-77/CHINA called for a comprehensive approach. He stressed the need to ensure the availability of substitutes for POPs that are environmentally sound and accessible to developing countries. He called for further action to: enhance awareness of chemical safety and management; develop accident preparedness plans; complete a protocol on liability and compensation for damages under the Basel Convention; establish regional cooperation agreements; and ban legal movement of hazardous and toxic wastes. CANADA said the recommendations of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety should be endorsed. He emphasized waste management,

prevention and minimization. NORWAY noted the need to intensify cooperation with developing countries.

On land and sustainable agriculture, NORWAY proposed a reference to sustainable conservation and utilization of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture. CANADA noted that provision of adequate food and nutrition will require environmentally sound intensification of food production. The US emphasized that the CCD Global Mechanism is not a financial mechanism. AUSTRALIA and SWITZERLAND also said the CCD COP-1 determination on that issue should not be preempted.

On sustainable human settlements, CANADA urged implementation of the Habitat II Plan of Action. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA called for a balance between urban and rural settlements.

SWITZERLAND proposed that the text on tourism recognize the need to involve local populations. The INDIGENOUS PEOPLES CAUCUS proposed adding the UN Working Group on Indigenous Peoples to those organizations that should elaborate an International Programme of Work. CANADA noted the impacts of tourism on biodiversity. MALTA recommended including references to eco-tourism and to the need for environmental policies in tourism development. BARBADOS stressed the importance of action on this issue.

On biodiversity, JAPAN said examination of the equitable sharing of benefits should take place elsewhere, such as in FAO. AUSTRALIA proposed reference to traditional and indigenous knowledge and the equitable sharing of benefits from such knowledge. The G-77/CHINA emphasized the role of women in sustainable use of biodiversity and called for implementation of environmental impact assessments. The INDIGENOUS PEOPLES CAUCUS called for the development of a bioethics protocol. CANADA said parties to the CBD must move the Convention's objectives forward in meaningful and measurable ways. FAO called for a reference to the 1996 Leipzig Declaration and Plan of Action on Plant Genetic Resources.

On SIDS, CANADA called for references to coastal development and to integrating SIDS into regional and global trading structures. AOSIS advocated provisions for an adequate review of the Barbados Programme of Action in 1999.

The PHILIPPINES proposed adding a paragraph on natural disaster reduction and sustainable development.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Participants responded positively to the Wednesday briefing by Amb. Razali Ismail, President of the UNGA. He echoed a popular demand for wider ministerial participation in the CSD, with representation from key departments other than environment, such as finance and development. He also flagged a number of ideas reflecting his view that the CSD's dealings with the private sector must be a "two way street." He raised the possibility of a code of conduct, provision of information to the CSD and a monitoring role for shareholders. NGOs concerned about access to UNGASS proceedings also took comfort when Amb. Razali signalled his intention to treat the Special Session like any other major UN conference.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

WORKING GROUP: The Working Group will meet in Conference Room 4 to discuss the Assessment of Progress Reached After Rio from 10:00-12:00. Amb. Razali Ismail, President of UNGA, will address the Group at noon. From 4:00-6:00 pm, the Working Group will conclude its deliberations.