



# Earth Negotiations Bulletin

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## UNGASS HIGHLIGHTS TUESDAY, 24 JUNE 1997

Participants at the 19th UN General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) heard 45 statements in Plenary from 19 Heads of State or Government, 1 Crown Prince, 20 governmental leaders, 3 heads of international organizations and 2 NGOs. Copies of Plenary statements can be found on the Internet at <gopher://gopher.un.org:70/11/ga/docs/S-19/statements/gov>. Eight representatives from international organizations addressed the Committee of the Whole (COW). In addition, the COW continued negotiating the draft outcome of the Session and informal ministerial consultations were convened.

### COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

#### DRAFT POLITICAL STATEMENT

COW Chair Tolba chaired afternoon negotiations on the draft political statement. On paragraph 1 (purpose of UNGASS), CANADA and AUSTRALIA proposed deleting the "long-term" goal of sustainable development, noting that immediate steps are also needed. The G-77/CHINA objected that sustainable development cannot be completed in the short-term.

On 2 (reaffirmation of UNCED), the G-77/CHINA proposed redefining the global partnership for sustainable development as one that respects the "indivisibility of environmental protection and the development process." CANADA preferred the existing "economic and social development interests of all." The US proposed using the definition of sustainable development used throughout the political statement. The EU proposed avoiding definitions since countries could not agree. The G-77/CHINA also proposed reaffirming that "sustained economic growth" as well as sustainable development must be considered long-term goals. The US proposed that sustained economic growth should be "in the context" of sustainable development, but the G-77/CHINA objected.

On 3 (recommitment to Rio principles), the G-77/China called for countries to "recommit" rather than "commit" to "work together to meet development and environmental needs." This was not opposed. The group also called for reference to "incremental cost" but it was decided to include this elsewhere. On 4 (humans at the center of sustainable development), CANADA supported the listing of major groups, but a number of countries suggested deleting the list and/or changing the formulation of indigenous people[s]. At CHINA's request, delegates deleted a reference to "civil" society.

On 5 (past and future progress), the G-77/CHINA deleted the reference to the achievement of positive results at the "international" level. The US objected. International results were to be included in an additional sentence. The G-77/CHINA proposed deleting the listing of environmental problems and added a reference to new and additional financial resources. The US said such repetition is unnecessary. The CHAIR said his version calling for adequate and predictable financial resources was agreed in the other draft document.

On 6 (problems), the G-77/CHINA deleted the reference to the growing gap between developed and "most" developing countries and growing disparities between rich and poor "within countries." The US added rich and poor "within and among" countries. The G-77/CHINA added a reference to unsustainable patterns of production and consumption "particularly in developed countries," but the US objected. The G-77/CHINA reintroduced previous amendments regarding common but differentiated responsibilities and the sovereign right to exploit resources. On 7 (integration), the G-77/CHINA proposed: referring to "implementation of Agenda 21" rather than sustainable development; adding language on economic growth; and deleting a sentence on democracy and human rights. The US proposed using the outcome of discussion on paragraph 17 (integration) of the proposed Programme for the Future Implementation of Agenda 21. The US, the EU and CANADA proposed deleting the final sentence on coercive economic measures and foreign occupation, but SYRIA argued for its retention.

#### PROPOSED PROGRAMME FOR THE FURTHER IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 21

Vice-Chair John Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda) chaired morning and evening negotiations on outstanding cross-sectoral issues.

**Implementation in areas requiring urgent action:** On 17 (integration of economic, social and environmental objectives), the G-77/CHINA objected to bracketed text on, *inter alia*: the interdependent nature of economic development and environmental protection; sustained economic growth; broad-based benefits; and democracy. The G-77/CHINA disagreed with the US and the EU on removal of the brackets and the paragraph remained unresolved. On 18b (policy instruments), NEW ZEALAND and NORWAY disagreed on bracketed text referring to indigenous people[s] and the paragraph was not agreed. The G-77/CHINA proposed deleting 18c (job creation), but NORWAY, SWITZERLAND, the US, the EU and CANADA supported retaining the paragraph, noting the importance of workers rights and poverty eradication. On 21(e)

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(impact of poverty on women), the EU maintained brackets on text regarding the report of the Fourth World Conference on Women.

The chapeau to **22**, "Changing consumption and production patterns," was agreed *ad referendum*. On **22**, the G-77/CHINA disagreed with the EU, the US, SWITZERLAND and NORWAY on the removal of brackets from two sentences noting unsustainable patterns in developing countries and emerging unsustainable patterns in higher income groups in developing countries. The PHILIPPINES proposed noting the emerging patterns in "other" countries, rather than developing countries, which was accepted. Subparagraphs **22(a)** (unsustainable patterns of production and consumption) and **22(b)** (role of business in shaping patterns of consumption) were agreed *ad referendum*. On subparagraph **22(f)** (programmes on energy and material efficiency), delegations agreed to remove brackets from an EU-proposed text on ten-fold and four-fold improvements in resource productivity in industrialized countries. In subparagraph **22(g)** (Governments lead in changing consumption patterns), CHINA agreed *ad referendum* to the CHAIR's reformulation of bracketed text, stating that "Governments in developed countries, in particular, should take the lead in this regard." No agreement was reached on subparagraph **22(j)** (eco-efficiency measures), where references to "the need to avoid" negative impacts on developing country export opportunities and "as appropriate, for countries with economies in transition" remain in brackets. In subparagraph **23(f)** (strengthening cooperation between UN agencies, WTO and other bodies), INDIA said it wanted to keep a reservation.

**Means of Implementation:** The G-77/CHINA reformulated paragraph **103** (high-tech info-communication) to note that a supportive environment needs to be established to enhance national capacity and capabilities for information collection, processing and dissemination, especially in developing countries, and that international cooperation is essential.

On paragraph **104** (Environmental Impact Assessment), the EU and US introduced an introductory reference to Principle 17 of the Rio Declaration. The G-77/CHINA proposed that EIAs be undertaken for activities that are likely to have significant adverse impacts on the environment "and" (CANADA) subject to a decision of a competent national authority. A NORWEGIAN-proposed text on environmental values and EIAs of national or international investment programme[s] remains in brackets.

On **105** (set of indicators), the text calls for a "practicable and agreed (EU)" set of indicators "suited to country specific conditions (G-77/CHINA)," to be used "on a voluntary basis by the year 2000 (EU)." The G-77/CHINA proposed changing "should" to "could" in reference to the role indicators play in monitoring progress. The US and EU objected to changing unbracketed text. Paragraph **106** (indicators of sustainable development) was deleted.

On paragraph **107** (national reports on implementation), delegates agreed to the original Co-Chairs' draft and dropped all amendments. The G-77/CHINA agreed *ad referendum*.

### MINISTERIAL CONSULTATION ON FINANCE

Ministers Jan Pronk (Netherlands) and Jakaya Kikwete (Tanzania) chaired afternoon informal ministerial consultations on finance issues in the draft political statement and proposed Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21. Minister Pronk summarized the main areas of agreement: many participants said that UNCED's financial targets for funding sustainable development have to be reconfirmed and deplored the overall decline in ODA. Participants committed to do their best to reverse the trend, though some noted domestic political difficulties. They discussed a flexible mechanism to allow States to regularly put

their own finance record on the table and to engage in discussion with the private sector, ministers from a range of government departments, including finance, and States in a position to begin contributing financial assistance. Several participants supported an integrated approach towards ODA, addressing, in particular, poverty eradication and capacity building. Minister Pronk said the Co-Chairs would report to COW Chair Tolba.

### FOREST CONTACT GROUP

The Chair of the Contact Group, Bagher Asadi (Iran), noted that a few things had changed since forests were discussed during the informal consultations that preceded UNGASS. The Denver communique from the Group of 8 contained two paragraphs on forests. An open-ended informal ministerial working group on forests had also been formed, which would provide political guidance to the negotiations. The group then attempted to begin negotiations on paragraph 34 (follow-up action on forests). This paragraph consisted of a number of options, which include an intergovernmental forum or an intergovernmental negotiating committee. A number of countries supported using a formulation the Chair had offered as the basis for further negotiations. It was agreed to do so, on the understanding that elements missing from this formulation could be reintroduced during negotiations. Discussion began with the Chair's text but did not proceed far, as proposals to reinstate missing elements were made. Delegates decided to defer further discussions until after the ministers meet Wednesday morning, but to provide the ministers with one formulation that contained all positions to assist in their deliberations.

### IN THE CORRIDORS I

Observers reported that the World Bank recently informed the Secretariat of the Convention to Combat Desertification that it is interested in contributing its expertise to the Global Mechanism. The form of such contribution and whether the Bank could act as a partner with the institutions that have offered to host the Global Mechanism, IFAD and UNDP, is reportedly still unclear. Several developed countries have responded positively, although they await more details. Some developing countries are reportedly apprehensive, expressing concerns that the Global Mechanism's assistance then might be tied to economic reforms. An informal meeting on outstanding CCD issues is expected Friday.

### IN THE CORRIDORS II

A number of G-77 representatives expressed reservations about the establishment of the informal Ministerial working groups to consider outstanding finance, forest and climate change issues. One delegate said the Group objected to the deviation from the main negotiations and pointed out that a number of States did not have Ministers available to attend the meetings.

## THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

**PLENARY:** 44 speakers are expected to offer statements regarding implementation of Agenda 21 during morning and afternoon meetings in the General Assembly Hall.

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE:** The cross-sectoral group will meet from 10:00-1:00 in Room 5 and from 6:00-9:00 pm. The group considering the draft political statement will meet from 3:00-6:00 in Room 3. The ministerial group on forests will meet from 10:00-1:00 in Room 6. The consultations on sectoral issues will meet from 3:00-6:00 in Room 6.