



GLOBAL MINISTERIAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM HIGHLIGHTS TUESDAY, 30 MAY 2000

Ministers convened for consultations on "The Private Sector and the Environment" and "Civil Society Responsibility." The Committee of the Whole (COW) continued discussions on the report of the UNEP Executive Director, UNEP's contribution to the implementation of Agenda 21, and the provisional agenda of the next Forum. The Working Group on the Malmö Declaration met in four, one-hour sessions to continue drafting the text of the Declaration. A working dinner on Rio +10 also took place, hosted by UNEP Executive Director Klaus Töpfer.

MINISTERIAL CONSULTATIONS

PRIVATE SECTOR AND THE ENVIRONMENT: Klaus Töpfer introduced moderator Lin See Yan, former Deputy Governor of Bank Negara. Jürgen Dormann, Aventis, focused on the new economy which is primarily based on communications and science, and can grow without increasing physical consumption. He noted that, with biotechnology's central role in the new economy, ethical and social questions will be important aspects of sustainable development. Masashi Kaneko, Nikko Securities, described the successful introduction of green funds in Japan. He said the companies are screened according to environmental criteria and investment in them exceeded expectations, especially by young women. Gunnar Brock, TetraPak International, said globalization is both eroding state authority and necessitating harmonization of legislation across borders. He noted the importance of the polluter pays principle, but said governments must promote participation in recycling, for example.

INDIA said clean technologies could be transferred through subsidies. INDONESIA called for benefit sharing between the private sector and civil society. ZAMBIA noted that the private sector in developing countries lacks capital and called for partnerships between the private sectors in developed and developing countries. The US emphasized private sector innovations and the adaptability of technologies. BELGIUM stressed links between environment, trade, and poverty. NAMIBIA raised issues of global unity, ownership of production, and power. JAPAN described its focus on eco-business in the 1990s as a way to stimulate economic recovery. MOROCCO advocated conversion of third world debt to environmental projects. CHINA said that UNEP should be empowered to assist the private sector in developing countries. FRANCE suggested that multilateral environmental agreements should incorporate efficient dispute resolution systems. PORTUGAL said the private sector is often stronger than individual states, making international agreements imperative for enforcement. BENIN described the different challenges faced by

developing country companies. The UK suggested consideration of an international environment court. KUWAIT described their policy requesting the private sector to devote 5 percent of profits to sustainable development work. FINLAND advocated improving eco-efficiency and internalizing the environmental costs of production. MADAGASCAR said poverty is the cause and effect of environmental degradation. SWITZERLAND drew attention to the importance of small companies. ETHIOPIA warned of knowledge concentration in private hands. SWEDEN noted that the market is a good servant, but a bad master, and that companies should not dominate politics.

CIVIL SOCIETY – RESPONSIBILITY AND ROLE TOWARD THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE GLOBALIZED WORLD: Klaus Töpfer introduced moderator Robert Lamb, Television Trust for the Environment. Charles Alexander, Time Magazine, described the merging of journalism with entertainment in the US and noted that environmental issues are not considered new and exciting by the media or the public. He said the power of advertising to raise environmental awareness has yet to be tapped and the US government must become open to civil society organizations, which could be facilitated through campaign finance reform. Yolanda Kakabadse, IUCN, illuminated the multifaceted nature of civil society. She described how NGOs were reacting to globalization and the shifts that occurred between 1972 and 1992. She also noted that civil society is not working to control governments but rather for governance to the benefit of all. Martin Khor, Third World Network, said civil society had recently influenced two areas: raising concern about genetically modified organisms and the effects of globalization. He stressed the importance of full integration of "common but differentiated responsibilities" into IMF and WTO policies.

AUSTRIA emphasized the power and influence of consumers. NEW ZEALAND lamented that voices of small business, indigenous people and citizens are not heard, and highlighted governments' role in reversing this trend. POLAND supported extending the 1998 Århus Convention on access to information to an international scale under the auspices of the UN. SINGAPORE reiterated building stronger partnerships with civil society in the UN. CANADA stressed the need for positive incentives to change behavior. CUBA said defined policies linking civil society with government must be established. FINLAND noted that civil society is the creative idea generator and space must exist for this innovation to flourish. KENYA, supported by ZAMBIA, stressed that NGOs do not always have clear mandates for environmental management and should not be supported at the expense of governments by donors.

This issue of the Earth Negotiations Bulletin © <enb@iisd.org> is written and edited by Emily Boyd <E.Boyd@uea.ac.uk>, Leanne Burney <leanne@iisd.org>, Elisabeth Corell, Ph.D. <ecorell@mit.edu>, Jonathan Krueger, Ph.D. <jkrueger@iisd.org>, Hernan Lopez LL.M., <hlopez@law.pace.edu>, and Leila Mead <leila@interport.net>. The Digital Editor is David Fernau <david@iisd.org>. The Editor is Pamela S. Chasek, Ph.D. <pam@iisd.org> and the Managing Director is Langston James "Kimo" Goree VI <kimo@iisd.org>. The Sustaining Donors of the Bulletin are The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Government of Canada (through CIDA and DFAIT), the United States (through USAID), the Swiss Agency for Environment, Forests and Landscape (SAEFL), the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) and the European Commission (DG-ENV). General Support for the Bulletin during 2000 is provided by the German Federal Ministry of Environment (BMU) and the German Federal Ministry of Development Cooperation (BMZ), the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Environment of Austria, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Environment of Norway, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Environment of Finland, the Government of Australia, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and BP Amoco. Logistical support has been provided at this meeting by UNEP. The Bulletin can be contacted by e-mail at <enb@iisd.org> and at tel: +1-212-644-0204; fax: +1-212-644-0206. IISD can be contacted by e-mail at <info@iisd.ca> and at 161 Portage Avenue East, 6th Floor, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 0Y4, Canada. The opinions expressed in the Earth Negotiations Bulletin are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of IISD and other funders. Excerpts from the Earth Negotiations Bulletin may be used in non-commercial publications only and only with appropriate academic citation. For permission to use this material in commercial publications, contact the Managing Editor. Electronic versions of the Bulletin are sent to e-mail distribution lists and can be found on the Linkages WWW server at <http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/>. The satellite image was taken above Malmö ©2000 The Living Earth, Inc. <http://livingearth.com>. For information on the Earth Negotiations Bulletin, send e-mail to the Managing Director at <kimo@iisd.org>.



NIGER emphasized that, unlike governments, NGOs are not accountable. CHINA said international NGOs must respect the cultural specificity of different regions. PAKISTAN noted that after the Seattle protests, NGOs have achieved a certain legitimacy with many governments. The GAMBIA said Africa is becoming a dumping ground for antiquated technologies such as polluting cars and air conditioners and companies do not have the luxury of integrating environmental management. ALGERIA noted that civil society is not homogenous.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ON THE ACTIVITIES OF UNEP: Chair Leandro Arellano (Mexico) opened the floor for comments on "Water policy and strategy of UNEP" (UNEP/GCSS.VI/6/Add.1/Rev.1), presented at the end of Monday's session. In addition to statements made on water issues on Monday, Portugal, on behalf of the EU, emphasized UNEP's need to work on the intersectoral approach to water management and suggested UNEP link its water strategy to the World Water Vision presented at the March 2000 World Water Forum. ARGENTINA strongly discouraged any reference to "transboundary" waters, while TURKEY encouraged use of that term. SYRIA preferred referring to "common" water rather than "trans-boundary." NORWAY highlighted the importance of linkages among existing conventions. JORDAN called for funding mechanisms to assist developing countries fulfilling their implementation obligations. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA supported the EU's statement for synergies between UNEP and other fora. AUSTRALIA, supported by the US and CANADA, suggested establishing a working group to look at best practices for freshwater management. CANADA and CHINA supported revitalizing UNEP's commitment to Global Environmental Monitoring Systems (GEMS/Water). UNESCO offered to help evaluate UNEP's water policy document as it evolves. ALGERIA reiterated links between water issues and desertification in Africa. UNEP highlighted its revitalized focus on the Regional Seas Convention.

CONTRIBUTION OF UNEP TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 21: UNEP Deputy Executive Director Shafiqat Kakakhel introduced the report on "Contributions of UNEP to the implementation of Agenda 21 and the programme for the further implementation of Agenda 21" (UNEP/GCSS.VI/7). JoAnne DiSano, Director of the UN Division for Sustainable Development, highlighted UNEP's key role for Rio +10 and recalled CSD-8's invitation for coherent collaboration. INDONESIA, CUBA and INDIA stated that Rio +10 should not renegotiate Agenda 21. SWITZERLAND emphasized the relationship between poverty and environment and NORWAY advocated implementing Rio Conventions. UGANDA requested additional capacity building funding for Rio +10 preparations. NEW ZEALAND stated Rio +10 should be locally driven and supported by UNEP. JAPAN proposed holding Rio +10 in Asia.

INDIA, VENEZUELA, THAILAND, NIGERIA, CHINA, and TUNISIA commented on failed commitments to tackling poverty, stressed financial limitations for implementing Agenda 21, and supported clean technology transfers. SOUTH AFRICA, supported by ARGENTINA, suggested a critical evaluation of why we have not made substantial achievements in tackling poverty. CANADA, supported by a number of delegations, advocated UNEP's role in the review process for Rio +10. CUBA, BARBADOS and VENEZUELA stressed representation of non-members of the Committee of Permanent Representatives. The EU suggested that the Governing Council (GC) submit a report of the Forum's outcome to UNGA's 55th session. The US recommended looking also at past achievements and encouraged an optimistic and forward-looking approach to the proposed review for Rio +10.

THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA OF THE SECOND GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL MINISTERIAL FORUM/ 21st SESSION OF THE UNEP GC: Delegates agreed to add an agenda item for the next GC reporting on the outcome of the current Forum. The COW concluded by adopting, with minor amendments, the draft report of its work (UNEP/GCSS.VI/L.2). It includes decisions for transmission to the Plenary on: UNEP activities; UNEP's contribution to Agenda 21 implementation; and the provisional agenda of the second Global Environmental Ministerial Forum/21st session of the UNEP GC.

WORKING GROUP ON THE MALMÖ DECLARATION

On the preamble, many delegates, including INDIA, BRAZIL and ALGERIA, called for reference to common but differentiated responsibilities. The US opposed this. BARBADOS, supported by many others, requested including reference to the Barbados Declaration on Small Island Developing States. The US, supported by AUSTRALIA, opposed reference to industrialized countries when discussing unsustainable consumption and production patterns.

On overview and emerging issues, POLAND supported reference to regional and subregional cooperation. The EU supported text on putting national sustainable development strategies in place by 2002. NEW ZEALAND opposed referring to exact dates. On environmental laws providing a basis for addressing environmental threats, SWITZERLAND supported reference to liability; the EU to the precautionary principle; and the US and CANADA to domestic laws. On assessment, BRAZIL, supported by CUBA, the EU and others, supported reference to unsustainable production and consumption patterns. The EU, opposed by ALGERIA, CANADA, the US and NEW ZEALAND, called for reference to green taxes. POLAND supported referring to preventive strategies.

On the private sector, BRAZIL requested text on enhancing governments' institutional and regulatory capacities to interact with the private sector. Regarding a new corporate ethic, the US and SWITZERLAND emphasized that some corporate actors already abide by environmental codes. Regarding reference to the Global Compact, INDIA, CUBA and BRAZIL expressed concern with linking environment, human rights and labor standards, while CANADA emphasized the voluntary nature of the Compact. ALGERIA, UGANDA, INDIA and others expressed concern with text on establishing environmental standards and responsible behavior for foreign investment, particularly in developing countries. INDIA suggested further study of the issue. Discussions continued at 10:30 pm on civil society and Rio +10, following the Ministers' working dinner. The results of the working group will be reported to the morning Plenary.

IN THE CORRIDORS

At the completion of the parallel Ministerial and COW sessions, one observer noted that the results of the meeting were unlikely to be as concrete as they could have been. Many delegates were, however, pleased with progress made on the Malmö Declaration, pointing to discussion of concepts rather than getting bogged down with negotiating specific language. But another delegate highlighted difficulties with drafting a short, action-oriented Declaration that everyone can agree with, while others expressed concern about some of the suggestions for regressive, vague or confrontational language. Expectations for a progressive political push from the ministerial working dinner were high, but the outcome was not assured and a late night of negotiations was a certainty.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

PLENARY: Ministers and delegates will reconvene in Plenary at 10:00 am to adopt the report of the meeting and the Malmö Declaration. After a short break, closing statements are expected from: Birgitta Dahl, Speaker of the Swedish Parliament; GC President László Miklós; and Executive Director Klaus Töpfer.