



## UNEA HIGHLIGHTS: THURSDAY, 26 JUNE 2014

The High-Level Segment (HLS) of UNEA opened on Thursday morning. At lunchtime a briefing was held on the two themes of the HLS. In the afternoon the ministerial plenary on the SDGs and post-2015 development agenda, including SCP, convened. Contact groups convened throughout the day.

### UNEA HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT OPENING

Opening the session, UNEA President Oyun Sanjaasuren underscored that environmental, social and economic opportunities can have mutually-reinforcing outcomes for sustainable development, and expressed hope that the outcomes of UNEA establish UNEP as the leading authority that sets the global environmental agenda.

Achim Steiner, Executive Director, UNEP, said UNEA is historic in both size and operation with the active participation of Major Groups and stakeholders, and highlighted convergence between the environmental world and experts in areas such as law and finance.

John Ashe, President of the 68th session of the UN General Assembly, called on ministers to send a clear message to the world and, with UNEA's outcomes, inform the post-2015 development agenda.

Prince Albert II of Monaco, Chairman of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) Sport and Environment Commission highlighted the IOC's partnership with UNEP and its support for sustainable city building, empowerment of women and promotion of non-violence.

Uhuru Kenyatta, President of Kenya, stressed the need to address, *inter alia*, the challenge of balancing rapid urbanization with the protection and conservation of wildlife. He urged member states to use UNEA to send strong messages on the post-2015 development agenda and SDGs, showing leadership that "complements and uplifts" work being done elsewhere.

**STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT BRIEFING:** Steiner briefed delegates on the state of the environment, citing statistics indicating that, despite global efforts, the planet's resources must be better managed. He highlighted, *inter alia*: loss of cropland; food waste; temperature increases; and sea-level rise as a potential "death sentence" for SIDS. He also noted positive trends, such as countries including natural assets in their national accounting systems.

**INTERVENTIONS:** BRAZIL emphasized the need for stakeholder input and announced that her country is allocating US\$1 million to UNEP towards SCP activities in developing countries.

Underscoring that UNEP is mandated to provide science-based policy advice, NORWAY highlighted the need for action on marine plastic litter and microplastics.

Oman, for THE ARAB STATES, said UNEP can "place us in a better position" to address environmental challenges. Egypt, for the AFRICAN GROUP, called for a stable, predictable and accessible financial mechanism for implementation of the post-2015 development agenda and the SDGs.

The EU noted "a coming of age for the global environmental community" with a new level of representation and legitimacy.

Mexico, for GRULAC, anticipated a ministerial declaration on environmental cooperation and priority setting at the next regional ministerial forum.

Stressing the importance of technology transfer for implementation, INDIA suggested using the Green Climate Fund to purchase critical intellectual property rights that are essential for public goods and services.

Saudi Arabia, for the ASIA-PACIFIC GROUP, emphasized that SDGs should address, *inter alia*: poverty eradication; natural resource management; sustainable, inclusive economic growth; and building resilience to climate change.

Reiterating support for a "strong and efficient UNEP," FINLAND announced his country has doubled its yearly contribution to UNEP.

NIGERIA cautioned against developing countries becoming the "dumping ground" for obsolete and polluting technologies.

Algeria, for the NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT and the G-77/CHINA, highlighted the importance of South-South cooperation and the need to address desertification.

CUBA called for technology transfer and access to information for developing countries and, with VENEZUELA, stressed the importance of common but differentiated responsibilities.

COLOMBIA stressed, *inter alia*, the importance of including chemicals and waste in the SDGs.

ARGENTINA called for "inclusive, flexible and participatory" consultation mechanisms and consensus-based decisions in multilateral fora.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH called on governments to, *inter alia*, establish an intergenerational dialogue for sustainable development.

### MINISTERIAL BRIEFING ON THE TWO THEMES OF THE HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT

Ibrahim Thiaw, UNEP, welcomed delegates to the briefing on the HLS.

Amb. Macharia Kamau (Kenya), Co-Chair of the Open Working Group (OWG) on SDGs, gave an overview of OWG negotiations, highlighting the 17 draft SDGs and the unprecedented scale of the UN consultative process.

Amina J. Mohammed, Special Advisor of the UN Secretary-General on Post-2015 Development Planning, said the UN Climate Summit in September is a "refueling" point on the way to Lima and Paris, and invited delegates' feedback to ensure greater synergy with the climate discussions. She stressed the need for a sufficient level of ambition for the SDGs and associated financing framework.



Christian Nellemann, UNEP, gave an overview of the current scale of environmental crime, noting the killing of elephants and rhinos and the illegal export of timber and its by-products such as charcoal, which he said generates two to three times as much profit as the illegal drug trade.

John Scanlon, Secretary-General, CITES, said the scale and nature of the illegal wildlife trade now involves criminal gangs and transnational organizations. He highlighted the outcome of CITES COP 16, which addressed wildlife crime in source, transit and destination states. He called for increased support for programmes working with rangers, police and others working on the frontlines.

Aldo Lale-Demoz, UN Office on Drugs and Crime, encouraged delegates to strengthen partnerships under the Convention on Transnational Organized Crime, strengthen prosecution and sentencing for wildlife crime, focus on the needs of vulnerable communities, and promote public awareness. He highlighted the International Consortium to Combat Wildlife Crime toolkit as a useful aid.

### **MINISTERIAL PLENARY ON THE SDGS AND POST- 2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA, INCLUDING SCP**

Helen Clark, UNDP Administrator, opened the session, explaining that inequality, poverty and environment are linked and require a “business unusual” approach to connect the dots. Moderator Erik Solheim (Norway) invited delegates to discuss ways of merging economic development with environmental protection.

DENMARK said that to achieve SDGs, states must leave their country-specific interests behind and unite. The HOLY SEE called for rejection of “unbridled” consumption and production, saying natural resources are the property of everyone and that creation should be respected and safeguarded.

The NETHERLANDS said SCP and recognizing the impact of global supply chains are critical to sustaining economic growth. MEXICO said that changing consumption patterns requires integrated, long-term policies involving all stakeholders. CHINA called for low-carbon, green and sustainable development. Emphasizing that environment is fundamental to the SDGs, GERMANY said economies must develop within planetary boundaries. ITALY cited four objectives: capturing the value of natural capital; promoting SCP patterns linked to planetary boundaries; prioritizing resource efficiency in all sectors; and shifting taxes from labor to resource depletion.

POLAND highlighted access to affordable energy as critical to poverty eradication. NEW ZEALAND emphasized the role that healthy oceans play for people’s livelihoods and global trade.

PORTUGAL said UNEA must have a “strong” voice in the SDG process regarding implementing, monitoring and reporting on the environmental dimension of the post-2015 framework. The EU said UNEP should play an important role in setting the post-2015 development agenda, particularly on SCP, and thus UNEA should arrive at a consensus that reflects UNEP’s newly-strengthened mandate. While recognizing UNEP’s role in strategic direction setting, GEORGIA stressed governments’ responsibility to implement decisions involving all sectors. SWITZERLAND said environment ministers should seize the opportunity to influence the post-2015 development agenda. THE REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO stressed the need to raise awareness among national authorities for effective action.

The UK said UNEA should make the case for full integration of the environment into the SDGs, rather than emphasizing specific goals and targets. KIRIBATI called for reflecting SIDS issues such as sea-level rise, hazardous wastes and the need for technology transfer in the UNEA POW. ROMANIA underscored the need to avoid duplicating work done by multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs).

JAPAN, *inter alia*, stressed low-carbon approaches and harmony with nature as necessary for sustainable societies. IUCN said nature provides solutions and that sustainable development cannot be achieved without well-functioning ecosystems.

URUGUAY called for sustainable and equitable growth. Women, on behalf of MAJOR GROUPS except business and industry, highlighted potential conflicts around the term “growth” and called for ensuring that SDGs provide for a “true transitional process.” FINLAND called on industrialized countries to take leadership in the transition.

### **MINISTERIAL DIALOGUE ON ILLEGAL TRADE IN WILDLIFE**

Introducing the session, Moderator Marco Lambertini, Director-General, World Wildlife Fund, invited delegates to address three main issues: the most important gaps in knowledge and action, and barriers to enforcement at the national and international level; how to ensure a coordinated UN response; and maintaining momentum from UNEA onwards.

Many countries underscored the inextricable link between poverty and illegal trade in wildlife, with a large number of delegates stressing the need for UNEP to play a coordinating and awareness-raising role on the socio-economic drivers, strengthening synergies between CITES and other MEAs for an integrated response, and sending a message that reaches beyond the environmental community.

Other issues highlighted included, *inter alia*, the need to: understand and address the socio-economic drivers of illegal trade among source, transit and consumer communities; ensure zero tolerance on corruption and illicit financial flows associated with wildlife crimes; focus on transit points for illicit goods; consider timber alongside wildlife; educate youth; and involve local communities in affected areas in order to find economic alternatives and sustainable livelihoods.

Most countries shared the strategies they have implemented to combat illegal trade in wildlife and called for a strong ministerial declaration on this issue. Others called for wildlife to remain on the agenda for UNEA 2, in order to maintain momentum on national and international implementation. One delegate called for recognizing the outcomes of other fora and agreements, noting “what is needed is leadership and coordination,” not more debate.

### **IN THE BREEZEWAYS**

*Carpe diem* – seize the remaining two days – was the emphatic call from participants to ministers as the high-level segment opened Thursday morning. There was hope that the largest gathering of environmental ministers since Rio+20 would generate momentum to propel the environmental agenda in the post-2015 era.

However, some wondered whether the format of the Ministerial Dialogue, in which delegations were limited to brief formal interventions, could have taken a more dynamic form. When the sun came out just in time for the lunch break, many participants seized the opportunity to engage in more informal exchanges while enjoying the beautiful weather and the lush grounds. The change in atmosphere prompted one delegate to reflect on the marked difference between the formal plenary setting in the conference rooms and the relaxed “campus-like” outdoor setting. He wondered what might have happened if delegates had been given more space to debate, in free-flowing Silicon Valley style, some of the ideas proposed in plenary. These ranged from specific experiences delegates had in implementing national policies to “blue sky thinking,” such as India’s proposal to purchase intellectual property rights and provide free access to critical knowledge and technology that was formerly inaccessible.

Perhaps, as one observer noted, there is need to continue tweaking the format to make the most of this unique platform and opportunity for collaboration.

**ENB SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS:** The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* summary and analysis of UNEA will be available on Monday, 30 June 2014 online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/unep/unea/unea1/enb/>