



UNEP GOVERNING COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS THURSDAY, 6 FEBRUARY 2003

The high-level ministerial segment continued throughout the day, with delegates focusing on sustainable consumption and production patterns, and on using the natural resource base to combat poverty. The Committee of the Whole (COW) met in the afternoon to consider a number of new draft decisions proposed by countries. The Drafting Committee continued its deliberations on various draft decisions in morning, afternoon, and evening sessions, and contact groups met on the budget, chemicals, adaptation to climate change, and the proposal for an Intergovernmental Panel on Global Environmental Change (IPEC).

MINISTERIAL CONSULTATIONS

SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION:

David Anderson, Canada's Minister for the Environment, chaired this session and introduced a background paper on the issue (UNEP/GC.22/8/Add.2). Noting that current consumption and production trends are unsustainable, he asked delegates to: identify appropriate policies and pricing structures; consider how to stimulate the development of appropriate new technologies; examine how changes in consumption and production patterns contribute to poverty eradication; and provide guidance on UNEP's role in this area.

Delegates identified a range of legal and economic policies and instruments. CHINA highlighted the phase-out of outdated technologies and use of environmental auditing, and the US, COLOMBIA, and SWITZERLAND supported tax-based or other market incentives for business and industry. The UK and AUSTRALIA supported eliminating harmful subsidies. POLAND underscored the benefits of consumer awareness and several speakers referred to eco-labeling. NORWAY said developed countries should provide assistance to developing countries to "leap-frog" to more sustainable technologies.

On UNEP's role, NORWAY said UNEP must take a lead in developing the WSSD's ten-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production in consultation with other organizations and agencies. The UK said CSD should review regional and national progress against baselines based on WSSD outcomes, and could work with UNEP to identify the resources and follow-up required. Speakers also highlighted the need for improved indicators and information, training, capacity building, collaboration, partnerships, and financial assistance.

USING THE NATURAL RESOURCE BASE TO FIGHT

POVERTY: In the afternoon, Governing Council President Rugunda introduced the session on using the natural resource base to fight poverty and on UNEP's contribution to the WSSD's biodiversity-related commitments (UNEP/GC.22/8/Add.3). Delegates considered: how to utilize fully the natural resource base in fighting poverty; how existing regional programmes could enhance UNEP's new guidelines on poverty and the environment; what role UNEP can play in developing national, subregional and

regional plans for poverty eradication incorporating WSSD and other goals; and how UNEP can use the WEHAB agenda in promoting sustainable livelihoods.

Many speakers underscored linkages between poverty and biodiversity, and endorsed the WSSD's outcomes. Several delegates noted the importance of involving business and industry, NGOs, local and indigenous communities and other stakeholders. MEXICO and others stressed the need to share genetic resources equitably. SWITZERLAND supported awareness raising and conservation activities, and MOZAMBIQUE linked the work of the CBD, CCD and other environmental conventions to efforts aimed at alleviating poverty in Africa.

On UNEP's role, BELIZE said it should help developing countries retain benefits from their genetic resources. The UK said UNEP needs a much closer relationship with UNDP and CSD to deliver the WSSD's outcomes, and DENMARK said the WEHAB initiative must be translated into action. Speakers also drew attention to UNEP's activities relating to land use, water resources, energy, forestry, and natural resource management.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

The COW convened in the afternoon to discuss newly-tabled draft decisions on: reconfirmation of UNEP's support for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change; action on poverty and the environment in Africa; support for regional implementation of UNEP's Programme of Work; support to SIDS; work on forestry-related issues; and UNEP's role in strengthening regional activities in the Economic Cooperation Organization subregion (UNEP/GC.22/CW/CRP.1, 3, 4 & 6 and UNEP/GC.22/CRP.4 & 7). These decisions were approved with minor amendments, with the exception of the draft on the Economic Cooperation Organization, in which provisions that could imply the need to establish a new UNEP regional office were deleted. A draft decision on regional implementation of the WSSD (UNEP/GC.22/CW/CRP.2) was withdrawn due to overlaps with the draft decision on regional implementation of UNEP's Programme of Work (UNEP/GC.22/CW/CRP.4).

Other draft decisions on marine safety and protection of the marine environment from accidental pollution and on sustainable consumption and production patterns (UNEP/GC.22/CRP.9 and 10.Rev.1) will be discussed on Friday morning in the COW.

DRAFTING COMMITTEE

The Drafting Committee continued addressing the draft decisions from the CPR (UNEP/GC.22/L.1) and new drafts issued by delegations.

The draft decision on support to Africa was finalized after compromise wording was agreed on the proposed amendments, including a provision dealing with assisting African countries in their preparations for MEA conferences. The new text on coral reefs that emerged from discussions in a contact group was approved, with a minor amendment.

On governance, the Committee supported an addition to the draft, suggested by a developed country, concerning a strategic plan for technology support and capacity building. Delegates also



agreed to streamline the procedure for submitting comments to UNEP on the issue of universal membership of the Governing Council, so as to avoid duplication of the General Assembly process.

The Committee considered a revised draft on engaging business and industry, prepared during consultations between one developed country and a developed country group. The Committee provisionally supported the text with a minor addition and pending resolution of one technical matter.

The text on the Global Judges Symposium underwent some changes to reflect a stronger focus on capacity building in the area of international law, and to respond to several developing countries' objections to highlighting the need to implement the Symposium's recommendations.

There was protracted debate on the exact language regarding the pilot phase of the indicative scale of contributions to the Environment Fund, and on additional funding for UNEP from the UN regular budget.

Text that emerged from the contact group on adaptation to climate change was reopened in the Committee, with several delegations insisting on referencing specific paragraphs of the Marrakesh Accords and the Kyoto Protocol. However, these and other objections were removed after further discussions in the contact group resulted in consensus language.

The draft decision on environment and cultural diversity, introduced by a regional group of countries with the support of another regional group, produced a response from a developed country, which argued for a shorter decision requesting the Executive Director to examine the issue further and report to the Governing Council at its 23rd session.

As of late Thursday evening, negotiations in the Committee were continuing, with more than a dozen draft decisions still to be approved.

BUDGET CONTACT GROUP

The budget group reconvened on Thursday morning to continue deliberations on the draft decision. The group agreed to a proposal requesting the Executive Director to prepare a breakdown of the regional allocation to UNEP's Divisions. After lengthy deliberations, text addressing increased funding for UNEP's Chemicals branch was approved with a minor amendment and transmitted to the chemicals contact group for inclusion in its decision. The text dealing with the provision of financing for SIDS, in particular preparations for the Barbados Programme of Action +10 Conference in 2004, was approved and transmitted to the COW for inclusion in the SIDS decision (UNEP/GC.22/CW/CRP.6). The group agreed to a developed country's proposal requesting the Executive Director to ensure that all Fund programme activities, as decided by the Governing Council, are provided with resources from the Environment Fund.

In the afternoon and evening, delegates engaged in informal multilateral and bilateral negotiations in an effort to reach agreement on text approving the Programme of Work and appropriations for the Environment Fund. However, as of late Thursday evening, delegates had been unable to reach consensus on this final outstanding part of the budget decision.

CHEMICALS CONTACT GROUP

The chemicals contact group finalized draft decisions on lead, the global mercury assessment, the Strategic Approach on International Chemicals Management (SAICM) and the Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions. The SAICM, lead, and global mercury assessment draft decisions were approved after the insertion of text requesting additional funding for implementation from the Executive Director. In the SAICM decision, references to heavy metals and a regular review of the WSSD's chemicals-related targets were included.

Regarding the text on mercury, the group agreed on an annex to the decision to guide immediate action, in light of recommendations of the global mercury assessment (UNEP/GC.22/INF/3). Following objections by some developed countries on the use of the term "Mercury Programme," the group agreed to use the phrase

"action on mercury." Delegates drafted text requiring the submission of governments' views on medium- and long-term actions on mercury. These will be compiled and synthesized by the Executive Director for presentation at the Governing Council's 23rd session, with a view to developing a legally binding instrument, a non-legally binding instrument, or some other measure or series of actions. The final text agreed by the group also included requirements to consider further action on other heavy metals at the Governing Council's 23rd session.

IPEC CONTACT GROUP

The group considered options for strengthening the scientific base of UNEP and the practicalities of establishing an IPEC. Discussions focused on whether an IPEC is needed, with some developed and developing countries expressing concerns regarding costs implications, duplication with the work of existing bodies, and uncertainty regarding the role of any body or actions that would be established. Delegates agreed on the need to strengthen UNEP's capacity and the links between science and policy-making, but found that further consultation was needed to determine the modalities for addressing the problem.

The final agreed text recalls Decision GCSS VII/1 on international environmental governance and capacity building and invites submissions to the Executive Director focusing on gaps and types of assessments, on how UNEP and other organizations are currently meeting their assessment needs, and on the options that exist for meeting any unfulfilled needs that fall within UNEP's role and mandate. The decision also solicits views addressing, *inter alia*, scientific credibility, the interaction between science and policy development, the role of existing institutions, and duplication. The Executive Director is to prepare a synthesis report on the consultations by the Governing Council for its Eighth Special Session.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Many delegates were reflecting on patchy progress following what one delegate described as "long and grueling" negotiations on Thursday. The chemicals contact group wrapped up its work, with most participants professing satisfaction with the compromise on mercury, which effectively leaves the door open on whether or not to have a legally-binding instrument. Meanwhile, the Drafting Committee was still meeting late on Thursday night, with several participants anxious at the number of draft decisions outstanding, and some observers already predicting that the Governing Council would not finish its work by Friday afternoon, as had originally been scheduled.

Meanwhile, some participants in the ministerial discussions were questioning the format and approach taken. While a number of delegates found the discussions useful, some were asking whether the segments could have been more focused, or whether they should be occurring in parallel with the other negotiations.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

MINISTERIAL CONSULTATIONS/CLOSING

PLENARY: The high-level ministerial segment of the meeting reconvenes at 10:00 am in Conference Room 1. Delegates will hear the President's report on the outcome of ministerial discussions, and will consider the agenda, date and location for the Governing Council's eighth Special Session and 23rd regular Session. The closing Plenary to adopt the session's decisions and the report of the meeting is scheduled to begin at 3:00 pm. It may be delayed if negotiations are not concluded on all outstanding decisions.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE: The COW will reconvene at 9:00 am in Conference Room 2 to conclude its work.

BUDGET CONTACT GROUP: The budget group is expected to reconvene in the morning to continue negotiations on the approval of the Programme of Work and appropriations for the Environment Fund. Check the Journal for details.

SUMMARY REPORT FROM THIS MEETING: The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* report containing a comprehensive summary and analysis of this meeting will be available online from Monday morning, 10 February, at: <http://www.iisd.ca/unepegc/22gc>.