



## GCSS-8/GMEF HIGHLIGHTS: TUESDAY 30 MARCH 2004

Delegates to GCSS-8/GMEF met in ministerial consultations to address the theme "environmental dimension of water, sanitation, and human settlements." The COW met in morning and afternoon sessions to discuss: assessment, monitoring and early warning; outcomes of intergovernmental meetings of relevance to GC/GMEF; and several draft decisions. The open-ended drafting group began consideration of the draft omnibus decision on IEG.

### PLENARY

**MINISTERIAL CONSULTATIONS:** Ministers discussed issues regarding: holistic sanitation; wastewater re-use technologies; managing and financing the environmental dimension of sanitation; and municipal wastewater issues including the links between the ecosystem approach in IWRM and poverty. Interventions addressed issues regarding the broad scope of poverty alleviation, including: regional cooperation; ecosystem management; links between sanitation and health; local empowerment, technology transfer and awareness building; population growth; the relationship between environmental protection and employment; and preserving environment as a resource for economic development. Following the interventions, GC President Ntagazwa said UNEP should transmit the results of the consultations to CSD-12.

### COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

#### ASSESSMENT, MONITORING AND EARLY

**WARNING:** UNEP Deputy Executive Director Shafqat Kakakhel introduced the Secretariat's progress report on the implementation of GC decisions (UNEP/GCSS.VIII/6). Steve Lonergan, UNEP, presented a review of the state of the environment, highlighting: armed conflicts, indicators of environmental change, environmental impacts on SIDS; dust and sandstorms; atmospheric brown cloud; and transboundary issues for shared water. SUDAN drew attention to the impact of conflicts on environment rehabilitation. KENYA called for technical, financial, capacity building, and assessment and monitoring assistance to developing countries. CUBA requested the full and continued implementation of decision 22/13 on SIDS.

On dust and sandstorms, the REPUBLIC OF KOREA noted that the problem does not only affect North East Asia but also other regions and, together with CHINA and MONGOLIA, called for further cooperation among international organizations. The LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES said that UNEP should attach more importance to this issue. Many speakers supported strengthening UNEP's role in keeping the world environment under review. With regard to the GEO, CHINA said that future GEOs should enhance

links and collaboration with other global and regional agencies in order to become an authority for decision making. NIGERIA noted the need for data to be more representative. TONGA stressed the need for capacity building in order for developing countries to participate in the GEO. The WOMEN'S ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION appealed for a review of linkages between different environmental changes and problems, with a specific focus on gender.

#### OUTCOME OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL MEETINGS OF RELEVANCE TO THE GC/GMEF:

The UNEP Secretariat introduced the documents for this agenda item (UNEP/GCSS.VIII/3 and UNEP/GCSS.VIII/INF/7). Many delegates addressed the importance of regional cooperation and the "Marra-kech process" on sustainable consumption and production.

On the global marine environment assessment, JAPAN cautioned that this process should avoid overlaps and duplication with other similar assessment programmes. He also called on UNEP to play an active role in the 2005 World Conference on Disaster Reduction.

On SAICM, URUGUAY said PrepCom II should analyze the SAICM principles, its international scope and relationship with MEAs and the chemicals security forum. The US said SAICM should focus on capacity building in developing countries and place chemicals management "front and center" of the development agenda. JAPAN emphasized that SAICM should be transparent and include the participation of all stakeholders.

**Statements from IGOs and NGOs:** On assessment and strengthening the science base of UNEP, the WMO said there is a need to reduce the overlap between initiatives of international bodies, and expressed its willingness to work with UNEP to develop educational tools on climate and water, and assist UNEP to strengthen the weather, hydrology and climate aspects of the GEO. The RAMSAR SECRETARIAT expressed the need to map the assessment landscape and the science base of MEAs.

On the intergovernmental strategic plan on technology support and capacity building, the UNFCCC SECRETARIAT said that the capacity building frameworks adopted by its COP could be a useful input into the plan. He said there was a need for greater collaboration with UNEP on the issue of education, training and public awareness. The CCD SECRETARIAT noted the COP-6 decision on capacity building, which invites UNEP to address the capacity building needs of affected developing countries.

On MEAs and the EMG, the UNFCCC SECRETARIAT highlighted the work of the Joint Liaison Group of the three Rio Conventions and stressed the key role of the EMG. The INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR CARING COMMUNITIES empha-



sized synergies with the InterAcademy Council, the placement of older persons in development agendas, and the improved use of the UNEP focal point on sports.

**Draft decision on small island developing States:** TUVALU presented its draft decision on SIDS, submitted with the Bahamas (UNEP/GCSS/VIII/CW/CRP.5). Many countries spoke in favor of the decision. The draft decision was adopted with minor amendments from the US and Australia.

**Draft decision on waste management:** MOROCCO introduced its draft decision on waste management (UNEP/GCSS/VIII/CRP.3). The draft was supported by G-77/CHINA. The EU, the US, CANADA, JAPAN, AUSTRALIA, the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, NORWAY and NEW ZEALAND said the draft should be deferred to GC-23 for consideration, expressing concerns over its implications on UNEP's programme of work and budget. TURKMENISTAN, ARMENIA, and UZBEKISTAN said the draft should include references to countries with economies in transition. Chair Van Gool requested Norway to lead informal consultations on the substance of the draft and report to the COW.

**Draft decision on education and the Earth Charter:** COSTA RICA introduced its draft decision on education for sustainable development in line with the Earth Charter (UNEP/GCSS/VIII/CW/CRP.4). Several delegations said more time was needed to examine the draft. Chair Van Gool requested Costa Rica to consult on the draft over the coming months and submit it for consideration at GC-23.

**Draft decision on integrated water resource management:** SWITZERLAND presented the draft decision on integrated water resource management submitted with Mexico and the Republic of Korea (UNEP/GCSS/VIII/CRP.6). EGYPT, COLOMBIA, G-77/CHINA, SUDAN and ARGENTINA requested more time to examine the proposal. AZERBAIJAN and NEW ZEALAND called for clarification regarding the compensation schemes noted in the draft.

**DRAFTING GROUP:** The drafting group, chaired by Ngurah Swayaya (Indonesia), completed two readings of the Bureau's proposal (UNEP/GCSS/VIII/CW/CRP.2), which contains elements for a draft decision on implementation of decision SS.VII/1 on IEG. A delegation voiced concern regarding the lack of proper consultation on the proposal and its late circulation. Negotiations went late into the night.

On universal membership of the GC, one delegation suggested language that would stress the divergence of views among GC members on the issue. Another delegate proposed noting the absence of consensus. Following a lengthy discussion, delegates addressed a reference to "the variety and divergence of views" on the matter, as a possible solution. A group of developed countries proposed text requesting the Executive Director to facilitate high-level consultations linking this issue with "an effective management mechanism." This met with objections from developing countries, with one delegate noting that the idea of an executive board is unclear and would, in fact, invalidate the proposal for universal membership.

On strengthening the scientific base of UNEP, a developed countries' group requested a reference to the establishment of an intergovernmental panel on global environmental change. Others objected to mentioning this particular option, which failed to enjoy universal support. The drafting group accepted the view of a number of countries that only the annex to the report of the intergovernmental consultation, containing government responses, should be mentioned.

On the intergovernmental strategic plan for technology support and capacity building, the question of funding an open-ended intergovernmental group provoked debate, with one country insisting

on using original language from decision SS.VII/1, which spoke of the "availability of funds other than the Environmental Fund." A developing country group called for additional funds for the proposed group. One delegation suggested deleting reference to using the report of the Executive Director on the elements for a draft plan as the "basis" of the intergovernmental group's future work, with a developing country group insisting on retaining it. The drafting group agreed to make a reference to "taking into consideration, *inter alia*," the elements for a plan. Delegates suggested references to the EMG playing an active role in assisting the intergovernmental group. Others proposed holding some of its sessions in Nairobi.

On strengthening the financing of UNEP, several countries suggested deleting references to the utilization of a voluntary indicative scale of contributions, and others insisted on retaining it. The section was debated at length, and language was agreed that notes the indicative scale's pilot phase, as well as welcomes the broadening of the donor base, and an increase in total contributions to the Environment Fund.

On MEAs, a delegation suggested replacing the existing text with two phrases, taking note of the Executive Director's report on the issue and reaffirming the relevant paragraphs of the report of the group of ministers on the IEG. A developed countries' group insisted on retaining the original text.

On coordination and the EMG, a developed countries' group's suggestions to refer to the EMG's programme of work in the next two years gave rise to objections from another group, which wished to retain the original short version of this section.

*Earth Negotiations Bulletin* coverage stopped at 10:00 pm

## IN THE CORRIDORS

Delegates appear to have been split over how much the COW should have abided by procedure and how much they should have allowed for flexibility, especially during the discussions over the draft decisions. Some observers were relieved that most delegates were willing to be flexible, allowing for draft decisions to be considered even though they were handed in after the deadline, so as not to waste the effort and long hours that had been put into drafting the decisions. Many delegates also expressed concern over the short notice given to the COW to examine the draft decisions.

While negotiations on the draft omnibus decision on IEG stalled on the controversial issue of universal membership, several governments met informally with NGOs to exchange views on the idea of a specialized agency on the environment. According to some observers this situation is ironic because this proposal has not been formally introduced into the discussions on IEG, with the proponents choosing to lobby the NGO sector instead of addressing the issue in the negotiations, fearing that it would not "see the light of day."

## THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

**COW:** The COW will meet at 10:00 am in Tamna Hall to continue deliberations on the draft decisions on waste management, integrated water resource management, and regional annexes. The drafting group on IEG is expected to resume in the morning.

**PLENARY:** Plenary sessions will convene from 9:00 am-1:00 pm in Halla Hall and from 3:00 pm-6:00 pm in Tamna Hall, to consider *inter alia*, the report of the President on the ministerial consultations, adoption of the COW report, and the closure of the session.