



**SUMMARY OF THE EIGHTH SPECIAL
SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME'S
GOVERNING COUNCIL/GLOBAL
MINISTERIAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM:
29-31 MARCH 2004**

The eighth Special Session of the United Nations Environment Programme's Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum took place from 29-31 March 2004, at the International Convention Centre in Jeju, Republic of Korea. Nearly 775 participants, including delegates from 153 countries, as well as representatives of 13 UN agencies, 15 intergovernmental organizations, 55 non-governmental organizations and 110 international and national media outlets attended the three-day meeting. Fifty-three of the fifty-eight Member States of the Governing Council were represented.

Ministers and delegates convened in a ministerial consultation, a Committee of the Whole (COW), and an open-ended drafting group. At the conclusion of the ministerial consultations, delegates adopted the "Jeju Initiative," containing the Chair's summary of the discussions. Negotiations in the COW and the drafting group resulted in four decisions regarding small island developing States (SIDS), waste management, regional annexes, and implementation of decision SS.VII/1 on international environmental governance. The decisions were adopted in the final Plenary on Wednesday, 31 March.

The eighth Special Session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum was the first meeting held in Asia, the first meeting to include the participation 90 ministers from 153 countries (the most ever), and the first special session since the World Summit on Sustainable Development. It was also the first meeting that concentrated on a substantive issue cluster (water, sanitation and human settlements) that is the foremost item on the UN Commission on Sustainable Development's agenda for its first work cycle in 2004-2005.

**A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UNEP GOVERNING
COUNCIL/GLOBAL MINISTERIAL
ENVIRONMENT FORUM**

As a result of the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment, UN General Assembly Resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 1972 officially established the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) as

the central node for global environmental cooperation and treaty making. The resolution also established the UNEP Governing Council (GC) to provide a forum for the international community to address major and emerging environmental policy issues. The GC's responsibilities include the promotion of international environmental cooperation and recommending policies to achieve this, and the provision of policy guidance for the direction and coordination of environmental programmes in the UN system. In 1992, the UN Conference on Environment and Development reaffirmed UNEP's mandate as the principal environment body within the UN system and supported an enhanced and strengthened role for UNEP and its GC. The GC was called on to continue its role with regard to policy guidance and coordination taking into account a development perspective.

The Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GMEF) is constituted by the UNEP Governing Council as envisaged in UN General Assembly (UNGA) resolution 53/242. The purpose of the GMEF is to institute a process for ensuring policy coherence in the environment field, as proposed in the 1998 report of the UN Secretary-General on environment and human settlements. The UNGA resolution also determined that the GC would constitute the GMEF in the years that it meets in regular session and, in alternate years, with the GMEF taking the form of a Special Session of the GC.

19TH GOVERNING COUNCIL: In 1997, the Governing Council met for its 19th session (GC-19), the first part of which took place from 27 January to 7 February, and the second part from 3-4 April, at UNEP headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. At GC-19, delegates adopted the Nairobi Declaration on the Role and

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Mandate of UNEP. In the Nairobi Declaration, the mandate of UNEP was revitalized and expanded to include: analyzing the state of the global environment; assessing global and regional environmental trends; providing policy advice, early warning information on environmental threats; and catalyzing and promoting international cooperation and action, based on the best scientific and technical capabilities available. The Nairobi Declaration was formally endorsed in June 1997 at the 19th Special Session of the UN General Assembly (UNGASS-19) for the review of the implementation of Agenda 21.

20TH GOVERNING COUNCIL: The 20th session of the Governing Council took place in Nairobi, from 1-5 February 1999, and marked the first meeting of the Council since UNGASS-19, the adoption of the Nairobi Declaration, and the appointment of Klaus Töpfer as UNEP's fourth Executive Director. The Council adopted over 30 decisions on a range of topics, including: the Environment Fund, administrative and budgetary matters; linkages among and support to environmental and environment-related conventions; and policy issues, including the state of the environment, coordination and cooperation within and outside the UN, UNEP governance and emerging policy issues.

SIXTH SPECIAL SESSION/GMEF: The sixth Special Session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GCSS-6/GMEF) took place in Malmö, Sweden, from 29-31 May 2000. Ministers adopted the Malmö Ministerial Declaration, which agreed that the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002 should review the requirements for a greatly strengthened institutional structure for international environmental governance (IEG).

21ST SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL/GMEF: The 21st session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC-21/GMEF) took place in Nairobi, from 5-9 February 2001. A high-level ministerial dialogue discussed implementation of the Nairobi Declaration and the Malmö Ministerial Declaration.

INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE PROCESS: The 21st session of the GC also established the Open-ended Intergovernmental Group of Ministers or Their Representatives (IGM) to undertake a comprehensive policy-oriented assessment of existing institutional weaknesses as well as future needs and options for strengthening IEG. The IGM met five times, and reported on its work to the seventh Special Session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GCSS-7/GMEF).

SEVENTH SPECIAL SESSION/GMEF: GCSS-7/GMEF was held in Cartagena, Colombia, from 13-15 February 2002. Delegates adopted the IGM report on IEG, which notes that the international environmental governance process had highlighted the need for a high-level environment policy forum as one of the cornerstones of an effective system of international environmental governance, and noted that the GC/GMEF should be utilized more effectively in promoting international cooperation in the field of the environment, providing broad policy advice and guidance, and identifying global environmental priorities. The IGM report also recommended that in order to play its role as the high-level environmental policy forum in the UN system the GC/GMEF should: keep under review the world environment situation and develop policy responses in order to ensure that emerging environmental problems of wide international significance receive appropriate

and adequate consideration based on sound science; provide general policy guidance for the direction and coordination of environmental programmes and make cross-cutting recommendations; promote international cooperation in the field of the environment and recommend policies to this end; and strengthen the coordination and institutional requirements for international environmental policy in view of the outcome of the WSSD and in light of the Malmö Declaration.

The report also highlighted the need to ensure the universal participation of Member States of the UN and its specialized agencies in the work of the GC/GMEF, and to strengthen UNEP's financial situation. In addition to the IGM report, delegates adopted decisions related to: a strategic approach to chemicals management at the global level; compliance with and enforcement of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs); development of a strategy for the active engagement of civil society, the private sector and major groups in the work of UNEP; implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA); and the environmental situation in the occupied Palestinian territories.

22ND SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL/GMEF: The 22nd session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC-22/GMEF) took place in Nairobi, from 3-7 February 2003. GC-22/GMEF adopted more than 40 decisions on issues relating to IEG, post-conflict environmental assessment, water policy and strategy, a strategic approach to chemicals management, a mercury programme, support to Africa, production and consumption patterns, and the environment and cultural diversity. Delegates also adopted UNEP's Programme of Work and budget for the biennium 2004-2005.

REPORT OF GCSS-8/GMEF

The eighth Special Session of the United Nations Environment Programme's Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GCSS-8/GMEF) opened on Monday, 29 March 2004. Kyul-ho Kwak, Minister of Environment of the Republic of Korea, said the WSSD was an important turning point in the establishment of goals and plans for global environmental protection in the 21st century. Anna Tibajuka, Executive Director of UN-HABITAT, delivered a message from UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan stressing the importance of further developing IEG, in particular addressing universal membership of the GC, strengthening the scientific base of UNEP, and the intergovernmental strategic plan for technology support and capacity building. UNEP Executive Director Klaus Töpfer highlighted the need to refocus attention on the foundation of sustainable development, which he said was "the only security policy" for the future.

Kun Goh, Acting President of the Republic of Korea, highlighted the importance of international cooperation in addressing environmental issues. Ryutaro Hashimoto, former Prime Minister of Japan, expressed hope that countries can learn from Japan's prior environmental experiences and that mistakes will not be repeated. Anna Tibajuka, UN-HABITAT, stressed the need for an effective mechanism to target the poor and ensure the active involvement of local communities in addressing issues on human settlements.

Børge Brende, Minister of Environment of Norway and Chair of CSD-12, reported on progress made in meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the WSSD targets related to water, sanitation and human settlements. He emphasized the importance of UNEP's leadership and the relevance of CSD-12 in



maintaining the political momentum for the implementation of the water and sanitation targets. Pakistan, on behalf of the G-77/China, highlighted the role of technology support and capacity building as central aspects of IEG. Amos Masondo, Mayor of Johannesburg, stressed the importance of working with local governments to ensure sustainable communities. Hak-Su Kim, UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), highlighted ESCAP's regional water programmes and underscored collaboration with UNEP.

Yul Choi, representative from the Fifth Global Civil Society Forum, highlighted the commitment of civil society to the goal of sustainable development and the achievement of the targets, time-frames and implementation of water, sanitation, and human settlement-related programmes. Annik Dollacker, International Chamber of Commerce, noted that the business sector is an important source of technologies and management systems to support sustainable development. Camila Godinho, Youth Representative to UNEP, called for the support of projects and programmes involving youth. She highlighted the cooperation between the business sector, youth and all citizens and asked that authorities empower marginalized groups.

This report summarizes the issues discussed at this meeting, organized in accordance with the agenda of GCSS-8/GMEF.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

Suk-jo Lee, Acting GC President (Republic of Korea), presented the provisional agenda (UNEP/GCSS.VIII/1/Add.1), which was adopted without amendment. Regarding the election of the GC President, Nigeria, for the African Group, nominated Arcadio Ntagazwa, Tanzania's Minister of State in charge of the Environment, as the new African representative in the Bureau. Minister Ntagazwa was then elected as the new GC President by acclamation. Tanya van Gool (Netherlands) was elected as Chair of the Committee of the Whole (COW).

The Bureau then circulated a proposal containing elements for a draft decision on implementation of decision SS.VII/1 on IEG (UNEP/GCSS/VIII/CW/CRP.2). The US said it had difficulty with the draft decision since it was circulated with insufficient notice. UNEP Deputy Executive Director Shafqat Kakakhel explained that the draft was prepared by the Secretariat in response to wishes expressed in the Committee of Permanent Representatives, during its regular meetings in Nairobi. Following clarification by UNEP and the GC President, no further objections were raised on considering the proposed draft decision.

Cuba drew the session's attention to the fact that even though it was the Caribbean regional focal point to the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Council, US visas were not issued to its delegates for them to attend GEF Council meetings in Washington, DC. Cuba requested the inclusion of its statement in the report of the session.

MINISTERIAL CONSULTATIONS

FOLLOW-UP TO THE WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: Contribution of the United Nations Environment Programme to the forthcoming session of the Commission on Sustainable Development: The Ministerial consultations took place from Monday through Wednesday to address the follow-up to the WSSD and UNEP's contribution to CSD-12 under the theme "environmental dimension of water, sanitation and human settlements." Over the three days, the consultations heard over 200 interventions from 48 countries.

The ministerial consultations on Monday afternoon, heard from 56 speakers representing 47 countries. Monyane Moleleki (Lesotho) and Elliot Morley (UK) served as moderators. The consultations showcased national and regional examples of good water management initiatives. Delegates deliberated issues regarding integrated water resource management (IWRM), governance, institutions, finance, capacity building, and practical actions to be taken.

Other interventions addressed issues including: management of watersheds; partnerships within and between countries; the need for capacity building and training in IWRM; technical and financial issues of IWRM; the need to build institutions; and the need for environmental impact assessments.

Following the interventions, Børge Brende, Norway's Minister of Environment and Chair of CSD-12, underscored the need to place IWRM strategies on the national level agenda of all countries and for them to regard IWRM as a priority expenditure area. He stressed that IWRM plans should be prepared and owned by governments, include all stakeholders, especially women, and that water policy should be integrated into national development strategies. UNEP Executive Director Klaus Töpfer emphasized MDG-7, which addresses the need to ensure environmental sustainability, and that IWRM provides a good backing for this work.

On Tuesday morning, ministers addressed "water and sanitation." This session was moderated by Francisco Huenchumilla (Chile) and Miklos Persanyi (Hungary). The afternoon consultations addressed "water, poverty, health and human settlements," and was moderated by GC President Ntagazwa and Philippe Roch (Switzerland). Delegates discussed links between water, poverty, sanitation and health as well as holistic sanitation, wastewater reuse technologies, managing and financing the environmental dimension of sanitation and municipal wastewater issues and links between the ecosystem approach in IWRM and poverty.

The WHO said that although the link between health and poverty in relation to water and sanitation is well-established, it is important to manage water and sanitation differently. She also stressed the need to reach out to women in order to make water management policies effective.

Other interventions addressed issues regarding the scope of poverty alleviation, including: regional cooperation; ecosystem management; links between sanitation and health; local empowerment that needs technology transfer and awareness building; population growth; relationships between environmental protection and employment; preserving environment as a resource for economic development; and the role of UNEP. GC President Ntagazwa noted that UNEP should transmit these ideas on water, health, human settlement and poverty to CSD-12, and highlighted the linkages between water and environment.

On Wednesday morning, the Chair's Summary of the consultations, called the "Jeju Initiative," was presented. Ministers and heads of delegation then had the opportunity to comment and make amendments to the text. The Jeju Initiative will be presented as part of UNEP's contribution to CSD-12.

In addition to the Jeju Initiative several countries presented summaries of innovative practices to the UNEP Secretariat, highlighting national measures to address integrated water resource management, water and sanitation, and water, health and poverty. These summaries are available online at http://www.unep.org/gc/gcss-viii/Ministerial_level.asp



The Jeju Initiative: The Jeju Initiative (UNEP/GCSS.VII/L.1) contains: an introduction; a summary of the key points of the ministerial discussion; and sections on partnerships, best practices, elements of the ministerial discussion, IWRM, water and sanitation, water, poverty health and human settlements, and the role of UNEP and other UN agencies.

Ministers emphasized that IWRM should incorporate an ecosystem approach as the basis for achieving the MDGs and WSSD targets. This requires: involvement of regional and local authorities, the private sector, civil society and local communities, especially women; active support by the international community for capacity building, technology transfer and international financing; and cooperation with all relevant partners.

On water and sanitation, ministers reiterated the need for adopting an environmentally sound approach to the WSSD target on sanitation, noting that water supply and sanitation should not be addressed in isolation. When applying the holistic approach to sanitation, ministers urged national governments and local communities to: pay greater attention to eco-technology; stimulate local demand for environmentally sustainable sanitation services; and include monitoring mechanisms.

On water, poverty, health and human settlements, ministers underscored the need to address water and sanitation issues in poverty reduction including: enhancing stakeholder consultation in policy making and implementation; conducting appropriate scientific research; and encouraging efficient use of cleaner production technology.

On the role of UNEP and other UN agencies in achieving water and sanitation-related targets the Jeju Initiative requests UNEP to: assist countries in the integration of environmental sustainability issues; incorporate water, sanitation and human settlements in post-conflict environmental assessments; ensure that environmental dimensions are introduced in poverty eradication strategies; and cooperate with international financial institutions.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

The Committee of the Whole, chaired by Tanya van Gool (Netherlands) met from Monday to Wednesday, 29-31 March, to consider issues regarding: assessment, monitoring and early warning; outcomes of intergovernmental meetings of relevance to the GC/GMEF; and IEG. The COW also considered draft decisions on: small island developing States (SIDS); waste management; regional annexes; education for sustainable development in line with the Earth Charter; and integrated water resource management. The COW established an open-ended drafting group to consider the Bureau's proposed draft decision on IEG. Carlos Alberto Gamba Lopez (Colombia) and Andrew Kiptoon (Kenya) served as Vice-President and Rapporteur of the COW.

ASSESSMENT, MONITORING AND EARLY

WARNING: STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT: This issue was addressed on Tuesday. UNEP Deputy Executive Director Shafqat Kakakhel introduced the Executive Director's progress report on the implementation of GC decisions as called for by GC-22/GMEF (UNEP/GCSS.VIII/6). He briefed the COW of the progress made in the implementation of decisions including: the state of the marine environment; international chemicals management; consumption and production patterns; SIDS; the Environment Fund budget; and the regional implementation of the UNEP Programme of Work. Steve Lonergan, UNEP, presented a review of the state of the environment, highlighting: armed conflicts; indica-

tors of environmental change; environmental impacts on SIDS; dust and sandstorms; the atmospheric brown cloud; and trans-boundary water issues.

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 GC decision 22/13 on SIDS. On dust and sandstorms, the Republic of Korea noted that the problem does not only affect Northeast 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 UNEP's Global Environment Outlook (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 called 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 issues.

OUTCOMES OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL MEETINGS OF RELEVANCE TO THE GOVERNING COUNCIL/

GLOBAL MINISTERIAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM: This issue was addressed on Tuesday, 30 March. The UNEP Secretariat introduced the documents for this agenda item, which included the Executive Director's report on the outcomes of major intergovernmental meetings (UNEP/GCSS.VIII/3) and a report containing information on matters arising from the 58th Session of the UN General Assembly (UNEP/GCSS.VIII/INF/7). The UNEP GPA Secretariat presented an overview of UNEP's preparation for the ten-year review of the Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA+10) and its work on SIDS. Many delegates addressed the importance of regional cooperation, the "Marrakech process" on sustainable consumption and production, and UNEP's follow-up on major intergovernmental meetings, in particular preparations for the BPOA+10.

On the global marine environment assessment, Japan cautioned against overlaps and duplication of similar assessment programmes. He also called on UNEP to play an active role in the 2005 World Conference on Disaster Reduction. Colombia expressed concerns arising from the overlap of chemicals-related meetings last November, and requested UNEP to reassess its international calendar of meetings in order to avoid such situations. Cuba stressed the importance of highlighting environmental education. On the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (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.

DRAFT DECISIONS: Small Island Developing States: On Tuesday, Tuvalu presented its draft decision on SIDS, submitted with the Bahamas. The G-77/China, Dominica, Japan, Tonga, Cuba and Kiribati spoke in favor of the decision. Jamaica noted that it



looked forward to continued UNEP support for SIDS, and Mauritius expressed hope that UNEP would take the lead role in implementing the outcome of BPOA+10. The draft decision was approved with minor amendments in the two operative paragraphs from the US and Australia, and transmitted to the closing Plenary, where it was adopted.

Final Decision: In the decision (UNEP/GCSS.VIII/L.1), the GC notes the preparatory process for BPOA+10 and recalls GC decision 22/13 on BPOA+10. It requests the Executive Director to prepare a report on the outcome of the BPOA+10 for GC-23/GMEF and decides to review the report in the context of UNEP's mandate.

Waste Management: The draft decision on waste management was introduced by Morocco on Tuesday. The G-77/China supported the draft, while other countries said the issue should be deferred to GC-23/GMEF for consideration, noting its implications for UNEP's Programme of Work and budget. Turkmenistan, Armenia and Uzbekistan made reference to supporting countries with economies in transition. Chair van Gool requested Norway to facilitate informal consultations on the draft decision.

On Wednesday, Norway presented a revised text based on informal consultations. Morocco, the G-77/China, the Russian Federation, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Norway supported the revised text. The US, Canada, the EU, and Australia opposed dealing with this issue, noting that technology transfer and capacity building were being discussed in the drafting group. After another round of informal consultations, Morocco presented a new text containing two operative paragraphs, one deciding to discuss the issue at GC-23/GMEF and another deciding to explore ways of mobilizing financial resources from all sources. The G-77/China and Norway supported the new text, but Ireland, on behalf of the EU, objected to the second operative paragraph. After a lengthy deliberation, a compromise text was approved with a minor amendment. The draft decision was approved by the COW and transmitted to the closing Plenary for adoption.

Final Decision: In the decision (UNEP/GCSS.VIII/L.1), the GC notes that the issue regarding domestic, industrial and hazardous waste management, in particular capacity building and technology support, will be discussed at GC-23/GMEF. The GC also identified the need to consider innovative ways of mobilizing financial resources from all appropriate sources to support efforts of developing countries and countries with economies in transition in this area.

Regional Annexes: On Wednesday, Cuba introduced the draft decision on regional annexes, submitted with Argentina, Colombia and Venezuela. The G-77/China supported the draft. Japan stressed that UNEP's activities should be based on the priority of environmental protection at the global level. The draft decision was approved following an amendment by the EU to reflect the language from GC decision 22/21 (regional implementation of UNEP's Programme of Work). The draft decision was transmitted to the closing Plenary for adoption.

Final Decision: In the decision (UNEP/GCSS.VIII/L.1), the GC recalls paragraph 31 of GC decision 22/20 (Environment Fund Budget), and paragraph 7 of GC decision 22/21. The GC recognizes the importance of having a clear understanding of activities undertaken by UNEP in the individual regions and how these activities respond to regional needs. The GC reiterates its request to the Executive Director to include in the programme of work beginning

with the biennium 2006-2007 regional annexes identifying the percentage of the budget of the Environment Fund from each of the divisions that will be implemented at the regional level and to present this for a decision at GC-23/GMEF. The GC also requests the Secretariat to prepare a synopsis of the area of work of each division and to present these synopses to the GC at its regular sessions starting in the biennium 2006-2007.

Education for sustainable development in line with the Earth Charter: Costa Rica introduced a draft decision on education for sustainable development in line with the Earth Charter (UNEP/GCSS/VIII/CW/CRP.4) on Tuesday. The G-77/China, Japan, the EU, Greece, and the US said more time was needed to examine the draft and the Russian Federation suggested that consideration of the draft decision be deferred to GC-23/GMEF. Canada expressed concern with the text recommending that the Secretariat prepare a programme to contribute to the UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development. India called for clarification on the reference to "ethical framework". Chair van Gool requested Costa Rica to consult on the draft over the coming months and submit it for consideration at GC-23/GMEF.

Integrated Water Resource Management: On Tuesday, Switzerland presented a draft decision on integrated water resource management, submitted with Mexico and the Republic of Korea (UNEP/GCSS/VIII/CRP.6). Egypt, Colombia, the 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. On Wednesday, Switzerland introduced an amended draft decision, omitting reference to the compensation schemes, and amended the text to recommend that GC-23/GMEF consider the inclusion of this issue in the UNEP work programme for the biennium 2006-2007. Norway, Monaco and Australia registered their support for the draft decision. The G-77/China opposed consideration of the decision, citing the need to consult with capitals. Switzerland expressed the hope that the draft decision could be addressed at GC-23/GMEF.

INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE: IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS OF THE SEVENTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL/GLOBAL MINISTERIAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM AND THE WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ON THE REPORT OF THE OPEN-ENDED INTERGOVERNMENTAL GROUP OF MINISTERS OR THEIR REPRESENTATIVES ON INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE:

Implementation of decision SS.VII/1 on IEG: This agenda item was first addressed in the COW on Monday, and then taken up by the open-ended drafting group. The issue was addressed in an "omnibus" proposal by the Council Bureau (UNEP/GCSS/VIII/CW/CRP.2), which contained elements for a draft decision on the implementation of decision SS.VII/1 on IEG. The proposal consisted of six sections devoted to various aspects of IEG, including: universal membership of the GC; strengthening the scientific base of UNEP; the intergovernmental strategic plan for technology support and capacity building; strengthening the financing of UNEP; multilateral environmental agreements; and enhanced coordination across the UN system and the Environmental Management Group (EMG).



On Monday, the Secretariat introduced relevant documents for discussion. All speakers expressed support for the IEG process and strengthening UNEP in this context. The US voiced concern over the lack of proper consultation on the draft decision, which it said violated its understanding of the agreement reached between the Secretariat and the Committee of Permanent Representatives in Nairobi, that no decisions would be discussed. It also noted the proposal's late circulation. The COW referred the Bureau's proposal to the open-ended drafting group, chaired by Ngurah Swajaya (Indonesia). The drafting group had three readings of the proposal on Tuesday and Wednesday. The decision (UNEP/GCSS.VIII/L.1) was approved by the COW on Wednesday, and transmitted to the closing Plenary for adoption.

Universal membership of the Governing Council: In the drafting group, there was a clear division of views on the issue of universal membership. The EU and Switzerland argued for this notion, as well as for facilitating its further discussion, with "due regard" to the synthesis paper of the Secretariat (UNEP/GCSS.VIII/INF/6). They also suggested including this item in the agenda of GC-23/GMEF. The US, G-77/China and Japan raised strong objections to the idea, with the US initially suggesting bracketing this particular section of the "omnibus" proposal. These views were shared by the Russian Federation and several other countries, which also spoke against the EU's proposal that the decision also refer to "an efficient management mechanism" for decision-making, to be established in a universal membership format. Cuba pointed out that the EU idea of an executive board is unclear and would, in fact, invalidate the EU proposal for universal membership. The opponents of the idea of universal membership insisted on language that would specifically record the absence of consensus on the issue.

Final Decision: In the subsection on universal membership the GC notes the "variety and divergence of views at the present time" of governments on the question of universal membership, contained in the note of the Executive Director (UNEP/GCSS.VIII/INF/6). The GC also notes the issue paper presented to the session by the Secretariat (UNEP/GCSS.VIII/INF/11), and requests the Executive Director "to continue to invite views" on universal membership to convey government positions to the UN Secretary-General as input for his report to the UN General Assembly on this issue. The GC also requests the Executive Director to present a report on this matter to GC-23/GMEF.

Strengthening the Scientific Base of UNEP: During general debate on the issue in the COW on Monday, the EU said there was a need to investigate the use of existing bodies, and stressed the importance of following up on the outcomes and recommendations of the intergovernmental consultation (IGC) held on this topic in January 2004. Australia suggested seeking more resources rather than creating new bodies. Canada highlighted access to information and monitoring capacity as areas that need to be strengthened, while the US urged UNEP to increase cooperation with academic societies. Cuba and New Zealand cautioned against duplication and overlap of work, with New Zealand urging UNEP to link its work properly and carefully with other relevant agencies.

During the negotiations in the drafting group, the EU requested a reference to the establishment of an intergovernmental panel on global environmental change. The US, Japan and the G-77/China objected to mentioning this particular option, which failed to enjoy general support. The group accepted the view of the US and the G-

77/China that only the annex to the report of IGC, containing government responses to the issue, should be mentioned. Canada added a proviso on additional funding, that governments "consider providing" funds.

Final Decision: In the subsection on strengthening the scientific base of UNEP, the GC notes that the consultative processes undertaken by the Executive Director and the synthesis report containing governments' responses to this issue (UNEP/GCSS.VIII/5/Add.3). The GC decision requests the Executive Director to evaluate the conclusions and recommendations made by the IGC and to prepare a report to GC-23/GMEF, and decides to review the implementation of the IGC's conclusions and recommendations at GC-23/GMEF. The GC further invites countries to consider providing additional funding for implementing the IGC conclusions and recommendations.

Intergovernmental Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building: During the general debate on the issue in the COW on Monday, the EU said that UNEP should collaborate with the GEF and UNDP in developing such a plan, to be based on national and regional needs. Australia said that it should be cost effective, and Canada and the US stated that duplication and overlap should be avoided. Mexico emphasized that the plan must have clear indicators that are linked to the budget and long term realistic results, and Oman stressed the need for international data and information dissemination. Egypt, China, Indonesia and others supported the establishment of an open-ended intergovernmental working group on this issue.

During negotiations in the drafting group, debate centered on the issue of funding an open-ended working group. The US insisted on using available funds other than the Environment Fund, while the G-77/China called for additional funds for the proposed working group. The US opposed using the Executive Director's report on the elements for a draft plan (UNEP/GCSS.VIII/5/Add.1) as a basis for the working group's future work, while many developing countries supported it. Some delegates suggested that the EMG should play an active role in assisting the working group, and others proposed holding some of its sessions in Nairobi.

Final Decision: In the subsection on the intergovernmental strategic plan, the GC underscores the need to provide developing countries and countries with economies in transition with assistance for implementing their environmental goals, targets and objectives, in particular those set out in the Plan of Implementation of the WSSD, and the urgent need to develop an intergovernmental strategic plan for technology support and capacity building. The GC decides to establish a high-level open-ended intergovernmental working group of the GC/GMEF with the mandate to prepare an intergovernmental strategic plan for consideration at GC-23/GMEF, and requests the Executive Director to convene meetings of the working group to fulfill its mandate and to seek additional financial resources from governments to contribute to this process. The GC also decides that the working group should start its work "taking into consideration" the elements for a draft intergovernmental strategic plan for technology support and capacity building. The GC invites regional and subregional ministerial environmental forums to submit views on their needs for technology support and capacity building to the working group for its considerations. Finally, the GC requests the Executive Director to make available



relevant reports, including an inventory of ongoing capacity building and technology support activities of UNEP, and of other relevant international organizations, to assist the working group.

Strengthening the Financing of UNEP: During general debate on the issue in the COW on Monday, many speakers welcomed efforts to strengthen UNEP's financial base. The EU and Switzerland called for the utilization of the indicative scale for contributions to the Environment Fund, noting the positive outcome of the pilot phase. The G-77/China stressed the need for more contributions from developed countries, noting that the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities should be complied with. Mexico, Egypt, Senegal and China stressed that such contributions should be of a voluntary nature and not present an additional burden to developing countries. Japan and the US said they had decided not to use the scale. The Russian Federation also stressed the voluntary nature of contributions and called for mobilizing other sources. The Republic of Korea said that it has doubled its pledge to the Environment Fund.

During negotiations in the drafting group, several countries suggested deleting reference to the utilization of the voluntary indicative scale of contributions, and others insisted on retaining it. The G-77/China suggested reference to and increase in the UN regular budget contribution to finance UNEP.

Final Decision: In the subsection on strengthening the financing of UNEP, the GC notes the pilot phase of the voluntary indicative scale of contributions and welcomes the significant broadening of the donor base and the increase in the total contributions to the Environment Fund. The GC requests the Executive Director to continue his efforts in seeking an increase in funding from all sources for strengthening the financial base of the UNEP and to implement decision SS.VII/1 with respect to the recommendations on the financing of UNEP, including through resources approved for UNEP by the General Assembly from the UN regular budget. The GC also decides to review all aspects of strengthening the financing of UNEP at its next regular session, and requests the Executive Director to prepare a comprehensive report on this matter for its consideration.

Multilateral environmental agreements: In the drafting group, the US expressed the view that this proposal amounted to reopening the discussions at GCSS-7/GMEF in Cartagena. It suggested that the decision restrict itself to two phrases: taking note of the relevant paragraphs of the Executive Director's progress report on IEG (UNEP/GCSS.VIII/5) and reaffirming the report of the IGM, as approved by GCSS-7/GMEF. The EU insisted on retaining the original text of this section and, supported by Switzerland, added language that would request the Executive Director to present a report on the issue to GC-23/GMEF.

Final Decision: In the subsection on MEAs, the GC takes note of paragraphs 56-67 of the report of the Executive Director on the overview of progress on the IEG and reaffirms paragraphs 26-30 and other relevant provisions of the report of the IGM adopted by GCSS-7/GMEF. The GC also requests the Executive Director to continue to promote the recommendations of the GC/GMEF with respect to coordination among and effectiveness of MEAs, taking into account the autonomous decision-making authority of the conferences of the parties to those conventions.

Enhanced Coordination across the UN System and the Environment Management Group: During the general debate on the issue in the COW on Monday, the US said that coordination

among UN bodies should be the core activity for the EMG. China said the EMG should report its work to the CSD, UNEP and MEA conferences of the parties. Kenya proposed that the EMG be based in Nairobi.

During negotiations in the drafting group, the EU and Switzerland, opposed by the G-77/China, suggested welcoming the EMG's programme of work for the next two years. The G-77/China also suggested relocating the EMG Secretariat from Geneva to Nairobi.

Final Decision: In the subsection on enhanced coordination and the EMG, the GC requests the Executive Director to continue to promote coordination across the UN system on environmental activities, in particular, those relevant to operations of the UN system through the work of the EMG. It decides to convey the report of the work of the EMG to the UN General Assembly for its consideration as an annex to the report of GCSS-8/GMEF. The GC also requests the Executive Director to present a report on this matter to GC-23/GMEF, which should also include a comprehensive assessment of the location of the Secretariat of the EMG, taking into account, among other things, existing efforts to strengthening the UN Office in Nairobi, as well as the mandate and membership of the EMG.

OTHER MATTERS

The Plenary addressed the issue of other matters on Wednesday. The EU requested that an agenda item on the integrated and coordinated follow-up to the outcomes of major UN conferences and summits in the economic and social fields be included on the provisional agenda for GC-23/GMEF. Supporting this, the G-77/China said that this agenda item should also include a focus on UNEP's preparations for the UN General Assembly's 2005 session, which is expected to concentrate on the follow-up to the 2000 Millennium Summit. The US noted that while it supported the EU proposal, work is still proceeding on the General Assembly resolution for the substantive focus of the GA's 60th Session and cautioned that the record of the GCSS-8/GMEF not imply that this resolution has been completed. The Plenary agreed to include this issue on the provisional agenda for GC-23/GMEF.

CLOSING PLENARY

On Wednesday afternoon, GC President Ntagazwa presented the reports of the COW (UNEP/GCSS.VIII/CW/L.1) and GCSS-8/GMEF (UNEP/GCSS.VIII/L.1) containing the decisions transmitted by the COW, which were adopted by acclamation.

The FAO emphasized the importance of addressing agricultural issues in relation to sustainable development and called for partnerships and synergies between the activities and programmes of UN agencies, governments and civil society. Mauritius, on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island Developing States, highlighted the importance of the BPOA as the blueprint for the sustainable development of SIDS. Highlighting the importance of the Rio Principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, he voiced concern that the UN Secretary-General's report on SIDS does not adequately address the principle in relation to the special case of SIDS. Noting the side event held on SIDS, he presented the key recommendations from the event, including that UNEP, *inter alia*, create a dedicated SIDS unit and support regionally-tailored programmes. He invited UN Member States to be represented at the highest level at the International Meeting for the BPOA+10 in Mauritius. France called attention to its proposal for a specialized UN agency on the environment, and highlighted its supplemental efforts to address



elements of IEG. Nigeria, for the African Group, called for strengthening the UN Office in Nairobi. With the G-77/China, he said that the ministerial consultations failed to address the environmental dimension of human settlements and called on UNEP's future contributions to the CSD to be consistent with the themes of the CSD multi-year programme of work. The G-77/China also emphasized the need to strengthen the UN Office in Nairobi and said the trend of locating parts of UNEP outside Nairobi needs to be reconsidered, calling for a reassessment of this issue. The EU, the Latin America and Caribbean Group, Romania, on behalf of the Eastern European countries, and Klaus Töpfer welcomed the Jeju Initiative as an important contribution to CSD-12. Töpfer then thanked all participants for their contributions to the success of GCSS-8/GMEF. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economy of the Republic of Korea, Hun-jai Lee, said the Jeju Initiative was a milestone in the global community's collective resolve to take forward the environmental dimension of the Millennium Declaration and the WSSD.

GC President Ntagazwa welcomed the outcomes of the meeting as an important step in meeting the IWRM targets, as well as providing a positive contribution to the upcoming session of the CSD. He officially closed GCSS-8/GMEF at 6:00 pm.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF GCSS-8/GMEF

A FAR AWAY PLACE

Ever since the UNEP Governing Council decided to hold its special sessions outside of the bustle of Nairobi, the meetings have generated far more interest than its regular sessions. The eighth Special Session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum was no exception. Held on a volcanic island off the Korean Straits, this meeting was not only in the most scenic natural location in GC history, it was the first meeting held in Asia, the first meeting to include the participation of 90 ministers from 153 countries (the most ever), and the first special session since the World Summit on Sustainable Development. It was also the first meeting that concentrated on a substantive cluster of issues (water, sanitation and human settlements) that is the foremost item on the CSD agenda for its first work cycle in 2004-2005.

WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE...

The policy dialogue at Jeju, as ministerials go, turned out to be well-focused: UNEP can claim a workable format for high-level policy dialogues, when every minister gets a fair chance to speak, without overburdening the confines of procedural time limits. The power of ministerial concentration seemed to embrace an astounding array of different facets of the water agenda. The lively exchange in Halla Hall confirmed the centrality of the environmental dimension of water, especially freshwater, and UNEP's strategic placement to lead the freshwater agenda in the UN system. Ministers discussed concrete examples of country experiences that address the challenge of reducing by half the number of the poor without access to vital water and sanitation services, with a view to replicating them across the globe. However, the number of two-page summaries of national innovative practices, which have been submitted at the Secretariat's request, was less than expected. This has added to the disquiet generated by the quickly approaching WSSD deadlines for national strategic plans, including one on integrated water resource management, in 2005. Some developing countries felt apprehensive lest the grand strate-

gies to provide access to safe water will be beyond their dearth capabilities to implement. In this context the session must be seen as providing the political pointer to the urgency of the ecosystem approach to water. The Jeju Initiative, as approved by the ministers, may be viewed not only as a substantive contribution to the CSD, but as a practical step towards action, by addressing the water and sanitation problems in the developing world. While the discussion could have been more substantive on human settlements per se, the initiative might prove to be an agent of poverty reduction in a crucial sector of urban squalor, thus bringing the international community closer to the achievement of MDGs and WSSD goals.

IMPORTANT, BUT COMPLEX ISSUES

The Bureau's "omnibus" IEG proposal laid on the negotiating table contained two issues that proved as slippery as the Korean eel: universal membership of the Governing Council and the voluntary indicative scale of contributions to the Environment Fund. The G-77/China, the US, Russia, Japan, the Republic of Korea and several other countries regarded the wording of the proposal as going beyond a purely procedural decision, as had been promised by the Secretariat, and went too much into substance. They saw this as effectively advancing the two issues, which are being vigorously promoted by the EU and Switzerland.

UNEP has been grappling with the idea of universal membership for almost half a decade. With every Governing Council session the arguments of the idea's supporters are becoming more ingenious; to be fair, this could also be said of its opponents. In any event, the discussion in Jeju was inconclusive, yet again, since the positions of countries are still wide apart. The session decided to relegate current and new thinking on the issue to the Secretary-General, who will report to the General Assembly. His main worry, it seems, would be to anticipate the repercussions of an overhaul of one UN programme on the entire UN system. If universal membership is accepted at some future juncture, the case for turning UNEP into a specialized agency, i.e., a World Environment Organization, deftly kept afloat by France in the margins of various meetings, may gradually gain prominence.

Strangely, the most obvious argument against this proposition still stands to be refuted: the prospective loss of UNEP's mainstreaming function in the UN system and its transformation into a specialized fiefdom. In its background papers, the UNEP Secretariat has been offering governments an exciting array of voluntary modes of spending money for Environment Fund, to suit different tastes. Judging by its statistics UNEP never had it so good, financially, and it attributed it to the success of the pilot phase of the voluntary indicative scale of contributions. Not surprisingly, the EU pounced upon the argument, as it passionately defended the utilization of the scale. However, the US, the G-77/China and others, who are wary of even a semblance of obligatory contributions, held back the transition to a new format, which they saw as virtually gives a blessing to assessed contributions. While they may take some satisfaction in the session's procedural outcome, the sponsors of the indicative scale obviously feel that time is on their side.

STRATEGIC PLANS

Apart from highly controversial issues, the session also addressed some important essentials, i.e., beefing up the scientific base of UNEP, and radically improving technology support and capacity building for developing countries.



Two highly useful initiatives have been approved. Although there was a half-hearted attempt by the EU to resurrect the assessment "super panel" on global environmental change (recommended by the seventh Special Session, and defeated, curiously, by the same delegates at GC-22), most countries did not want a mechanism at this time, and opted for a simpler exploratory approach that will evaluate UNEP's thorough polling of a broad range of official and scientific sources. Environmental assessment, monitoring and early warning is the mandate and the strength of UNEP, and Jeju has given UNEP's scientific outreach an additional boost.

To the satisfaction of developing country delegates, the Governing Council also gave the green light for the establishment of a high-level working group, which is charged with preparing an intergovernmental strategic plan for technology support and capacity building, in time for the GC-23 session early next year.

The consideration of the work done by the Environmental Management Group led to calls for better coordination in the UN system. Through no fault of UNEP, the results of its activities appear somewhat skimpy. Interestingly, the G-77/China have used the discussion on the EMG to try to relocate its Secretariat to Nairobi, as a means to block what they see as attempts to move important environmental operations away from Kenya. However, many have suggested this has more to do with a growing feeling that Nairobi is becoming isolated as a UN headquarters, and less to do with the performance of the EMG.

THE VIEW FROM MOUNT HALLA

The meeting on Jeju Island is the fifth GC/GMEF in the course of four years. The optimists have been vindicated: a title that designates a meeting as a "Ministerial Forum" is bound to attract more attention than a "Governing Council session." The GMEF has again proved its value as an important annual gathering of environment ministers. For them, it has been an opportunity for an unfettered exchange of views, as well as an educational experience. Hopefully, it will aid them in preparing for the upcoming groundbreaking CSD-12 in New York later this month.

The session in Jeju was the first Governing Council/GMEF since the CSD reinvented itself, and it fit snugly in the new streamlined multi-year mode of the Commission. The results of the session should be firstly judged against its substantive contribution to the CSD. There were high expectations that the UNEP thematic cluster contribution would fall into place in the global sustainable development process. In this sense the delegates may rightly feel a sense of achievement: UNEP has reinforced its established niche as the environmental arm of the sustainable development nexus. However, some participants posed a troubling question: is there a danger of UNEP evolving into an appendage of the CSD on the contributing end of its all-embracing multi-cycle work programme?

On the whole, the Jeju session was surprisingly smooth. In the final hours before the opening ceremony the Council managed to resolve an awkward chairmanship problem. Since Uganda was not elected to the Governing Council, while maintaining the Presidency of the Bureau, it could not preside at the session. At the same time it was Africa's turn, according to the rotation principle among regions. Thankfully, the problem did not degenerate into a squabble: delegations agreed to elect Tanzania as President. The procedural hitches with late tabling of draft decisions, and a frantic attempt by governments and the Secretariat to squeeze a week's workload into three days did little to dampen the spirit of delegates.

Every Special Session inevitably raises the question of regional focus. The huge investment in the logistics of holding conferences in various regions, albeit carried by host governments, must be also checked against the benefits the regions enjoy as a result. Do Special Sessions focus sufficiently on regional problems? Did Asia and the Pacific, which boasts the lowest freshwater availability in the world and the worst big city air pollution, receive sufficient attention? Some delegates noted that the Jeju session did not really tackle the problem of dust and sandstorms, an emerging environmental threat in Northeast Asia, with significant health and economic consequences that extend beyond the region. The regional aspect, strongly emphasized by the WSSD, is one that will require extra attention from every future Special Session/GMEF.

The Republic of Korea is a recognized leader in environmental matters in Asia, and the eco-technology exhibition held in the impressive International Convention Center provided adequate proof. Jeju Island, a UNESCO-designated biosphere reserve, is a model example of environmental consciousness, which the host country reinforced in a generous display of hospitality and governmental attention. While many delegates regarded Jeju as "a far-away place of which we know very little," it will now occupy a prominent place in world environmental history.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR BEFORE GC-23/GMEF

CSD ACTING AS THE PREPCOM FOR THE INTERNATIONAL MEETING TO REVIEW THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BPOA FOR THE SUSTAINABLE

DEVELOPMENT OF SIDS: The preparatory meeting for the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the BPOA for the Sustainable Development of SIDS will be held from 14-16 April 2004, in New York. For more information, contact: Diane Quarless, UN Division on Sustainable Development, UN SIDS Unit; tel: +1-212-963-4135; fax: +1-917-367-3391; e-mail: Mauritius2004@sidsnet.org; Internet: <http://www.sidsnet.org>

TWELFTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: CSD-12 will meet from 19-30 April 2004, in New York. This will be a "Review Year" to evaluate progress made in implementing sustainable development goals and identifying obstacles and constraints on the thematic cluster of water, sanitation and human settlements. For more information, contact: UN Division for Sustainable Development; tel: +1-212-963-2803; fax: +1-212-963-4260; e-mail: dsd@un.org; Internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd12/csd12.htm>

UNEP-GEF SUBREGIONAL WORKSHOP ON DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL BIOSAFETY FRAMEWORKS FOR FRANCOPHONE AFRICA:

This workshop is tentatively scheduled for 20-23 April 2004, in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. This workshop aims to help participants acquire a better understanding of the different options for regulatory regimes and administrative systems for biosafety, as well as legal and administrative requirements of the Cartagena Protocol. For more information, contact: Christopher Briggs; tel: +41-22-917-8411; fax: +41-22-917-8070; e-mail: chris.briggs@unep.ch; Internet: <http://www.unep.ch/biosafety/development/devsubregwrkshops.htm>

UNEP WORKSHOP ON FINANCING DAMS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: This meeting will take place from 21-22 April 2004, in London, United Kingdom. This workshop, organized by the UNEP-Dams and Development Project



(DDP) and co-sponsored by the British Dams Society and WWF, aims to identify ways of minimizing risk related to the financing of dams and their alternatives and achieving more sustainable projects. For more information, contact: UNEP-DDP; tel: +254-20-62-3891; fax: +254-20-62-4763; e-mail: ddpinfo@unep.org; Internet: http://www.unep-dams.org/document.php?doc_id=283

FOURTH WORLD FISHERIES CONGRESS: The fourth World Fisheries Congress takes place from 2-6 May 2004, in Vancouver, Canada. Under the theme of "Reconciling Fisheries with Conservation: The Challenge of Managing Aquatic Ecosystems," the Congress will explore the issues that underpin the reconciliation of fisheries with conservation through the promotion of scientific advice, cooperation and partnership among the world's fisheries scientists, managers, the fishing industry and conservationists. For more information, contact: Congress Secretariat; tel: +1-604-688-9655; fax: +1-604-685-3521; e-mail: fish2004@advance-group.com; Internet: http://www.worldfisheries2004.org/program/congress_theme.htm

SECOND CARIBBEAN ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM & EXHIBITION: This meeting will take place from 31 May to 4 June 2004, in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad. This Forum aims to convene key Caribbean and international stakeholders in the public and private sectors, civil society, the media, academics, researchers, experts, donor and development agencies, technical agencies and institutions, among others, to discuss issues and share experiences related to environment and development. For more information, contact: CEF-2, Conference Secretariat; tel: +758-452-2501; fax: +758-453-2721; e-mail: cef2@cehi.org.lc; Internet: <http://www.cehi.org.lc/cef2/index.htm>

FIFTH MEETING OF THE OPEN-ENDED INFORMAL CONSULTATIVE PROCESS ON OCEANS AND THE LAW OF THE SEA: This meeting will take place from 7-11 June 2004, at UN headquarters in New York. This meeting will organize its discussions around new sustainable uses of the oceans, including the conservation and management of the biological diversity of the seabed in areas beyond national jurisdiction, as well as issues discussed at previous meetings. An international workshop will be held in conjunction with this meeting to further consider and review a draft document on the establishment of a regular process under the UN for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment. For more information, contact: UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea; tel: +1-212-963-3962; fax: +1-212-963-2811; e-mail: doalos@un.org; Internet: http://www.un.org/Depts/los/consultative_process/consultative_process.htm

GLOBAL H2O PARTNERSHIP CONFERENCE: This conference will take place from 11-14 May 2004, in Cairns, Australia. UNEP and partners launched the Hilltops-2-Oceans (H2O) Partnership Initiative in September 2002 as a Type II Partnership of the WSSD with the aim of highlighting the links between the freshwater, coastal and marine environments, and promoting concrete actions to address river, coastal and marine pollution. The Conference will also serve as an interim assessment of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA), in preparation for the Second Intergovernmental Review of the GPA in 2006. For more information, contact: Conference Secretariat; tel: +31-70-311-4467; fax: +31-70-345-664831; e-mail: h2o@unep.nl; Internet: <http://www.hilltops2oceans.org>

2004 TUNZA INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S

CONFERENCE ON THE ENVIRONMENT: This conference, organized by UNEP, will take place from the 19-23 July 2004, in New London, Connecticut, USA. The Conference will bring together children from around the world to discuss the environment and learn about their rights and responsibilities as stewards. Major themes to be discussed include: Oceans, Rivers and Waterways; Living on the Edge of Extinction; Indigenous Healing Ways; and Energy. For more information, contact: ICC; tel: +1-860-437-0757; e-mail: info@icc04.org; Internet: <http://www.icc04.org/>

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON GLOBAL WATERS ASSESSMENT AND INTEGRATED WATERS MANAGEMENT: This conference will take place from 22-25 August 2004, in Kalmar, Sweden. In conjunction with the Global International Waters Assessment (GIWA) second General Assembly, this conference will discuss the interactions between science and society in promoting the sustainable use of trans-boundary river basins and seas. For more information, contact: GIWA; tel: +46-480-44-73-53; fax: +46-480-44-73-55; e-mail: info@giwa.net; Internet: <http://www.giwa.net/conference2004>

INTERNATIONAL MEETING TO REVIEW THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BARBADOS PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES: This meeting will take place from 30 August to 3 September 2004, in Mauritius. For more information, contact: Diane Quarless, UN SIDS Unit; tel: +1-212-963-4135 fax: +1-917-367-3391; e-mail: mauritius2004@sidsnet.org; Internet: <http://www.sidsnet.org>

WORLD WATER CONGRESS: The World Water Congress, sponsored by the International Water Association (IWA), will take place from 19-24 September 2004, in Marrakech, Morocco. Topics to be discussed include: operating water and wastewater systems; integrated water resource and river basin management; and water and health. For more information, contact: International Water Association; tel: +44-20-7654-5500; fax: +44-20-7654-5555; e-mail: water@iwahq.org.uk; Internet: <http://www.iwa2004marrakech.com/>

FIRST GLOBAL WASH FORUM: IMPLEMENTING THE GOALS OF THE WSSD: Organized by the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC), the first Global WASH Forum is expected to take place from 1-5 December 2004, in Dakar, Senegal. The Forum aims to draw lessons on the success of water, sanitation and hygiene programmes, sector reforms and development partnerships in poverty eradication, and to strengthen regional and national partnership initiatives aimed at attaining the relevant goals of the WSSD. For more information, contact: Forum Manager; tel: +41-22-917-8657; fax: +41-22-917-8084; e-mail: wsscc@who.int; Internet: http://www.wsscc.org/load.cfm?edit_id=332

23RD SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL/ GMEF: GC-23/GMEF will take place in Nairobi, Kenya, in February 2005. For more information, contact: Secretary for UNEP Governing Council; tel: +254-2-623431/ 623411; fax: +254-2-623929/623748; e-mail: beverly.miller@unep.org; Internet: <http://www.unep.org>