Earth Negotiations Bulletin

GCSS-12/GMEF FINAL

A Reporting Service for Environment and Development Negotiations

Online at http://www.iisd.ca/unepgc/unepss12/

Vol. 16 No. 98 *Published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)* *Saturday, 25 February 2012*

SUMMARY OF THE TWELFTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE UNEP GOVERNING COUNCIL/GLOBAL MINISTERIAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM: 20-22 FEBRUARY 2012

The 12th Special Session of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GCSS-12/GMEF) took place at the United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON), Kenya, from 20-22 February 2012. The ministerial consultations during the 12th Special Session focused on emerging policy issues under the overall theme of "The environmental agenda in the changing world: From Stockholm (1972) to Rio (2012)." Over 951 participants, representing more than 100 governments, as well as intergovernmental organizations, UN agencies, and Major Groups and other stakeholders, attended the meeting. The GCSS-12/GMEF concluded its work by adopting eight decisions on: "UNEP at 40; " international environmental governance (IEG); world environmental situation; sustainable consumption and production (SCP); consultative process on financing options for chemicals and wastes; enhancing cooperation and coordination with the chemicals and wastes cluster; budget and programme of work including financial and administrative arrangements between UNEP and the multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs); and enhanced coordination across the UN system, including the Environment Management Group (EMG).

Many delegates leaving the plenary hall in Gigiri felt that the meeting had taken an important step in clarifying the GC/GMEF's position in the run up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD or Rio+20), while others expressed disappointment that concrete guidance for the environmental pillar of the sustainable development agenda was not achieved. The session also highlighted prevailing divergence among delegations on elements of both the main UNCSD themes: elevating the status of UNEP to a specialized agency and the concept of the green economy.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UNEP GC/GMEF

As a result of the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment, the UN General Assembly, in its resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 1972, established UNEP as the central UN node for global environmental cooperation and treaty making. The resolution also established the UNEP 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 the recommendation of policies to achieve it, and the provision of policy guidance for the direction and coordination of environmental programmes in the UN system. The GC reports to the UN General Assembly, which also elects the GC's 58 members for four-year terms, taking into account the principle of equitable regional representation. The GMEF is constituted by the GC as envisaged in UN General Assembly resolution 53/242. The purpose of the GMEF is to institute, at a high political level, a process for reviewing important and emerging policy issues in the field of the environment.

GCSS-6 /GMEF: The sixth Special Session of the GC/GMEF (GCSS-6/GMEF) took place from 29-31 May 2000, in Malmö, Sweden. Ministers adopted the Malmö Ministerial

IN THIS ISSUE

A Brief History of the UNEP GC/GMEF 1

GCSS-12/GMEF Report 2
- Ministerial Consultations 3
- Committee of the Whole 6
- GCSS-11/GMEF Decisions 6
- Closing Plenary 9

A Brief Analysis of GCSS-12/GMEF 10

Upcoming Meetings 11

Glossary 14

This issue of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* © <enb@iisd.org> is written and edited by Asheline Appleton, Wangu Mwangi, Delia Paul, Tallash Kantai and Andrey Vavilov, Ph.D. The Digital Editor is Francis Dejon. The Editor is Pamela S. Chasek, Ph.D. <pam@iisd.org>. The Director of IISD Reporting Services is Langston James "Kimo" Goree VI <kimo@iisd.org>. The Sustaining Donors of the *Bulletin* are the European Commission (DG-ENV), the Government of the United States of America (through the Department of State Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs), the Government of Canada (through CIDA), the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU). General Support for the *Bulletin* during 2012 is provided by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Government of Australia, the Ministry of Environment of Sweden, the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, SWAN International, the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN), the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Japanese Ministry of Environment (through the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies - IGES), the Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (through the Global Industrial and Social Progress Research Institute – GISPRI) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Funding for translation of the *Bulletin* into French has been provided by the Government of France, the Belgium Walloon Region, the Province of Québec, and the International Organization of the Francophone (OIF and IEPF). The opinions expressed in the *Bulletin* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of IISD or other donors. Excerpts from the *Bulletin* may be used in non-commercial publications with appropriate academic citation. For information on the *Bulletin*, including requests to provide reporting services, contact the Director of IISD Reporting Services at <kimo@iisd.org>, +1-646-536-7556 or 300 East 56th St., 11D, New York, NY 10022, United States of America.

http://unep.iisd.mobi/

Declaration, which agreed that the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) should review the requirements for a greatly strengthened institutional structure for IEG.

GC-21/GMEF: This meeting took place from 5-9 February 2001, in Nairobi, Kenya. Delegates 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. They also adopted decision 21/7, which requests the UNEP Executive Director to examine the need for a strategic approach to international chemicals management (SAICM).

GCSS-7/GMEF: This meeting was held from 13-15 February 2002, in Cartagena, Colombia. In its decision SS.VII/1, the GC/GMEF adopted the IGM report, which contains recommendations aimed at strengthening IEG, including through: improved coherence in international environmental policy-making; strengthening the role and financial situation of UNEP; improved coordination among, and effectiveness of, multilateral environmental agreements; and capacity building, technology transfer and country-level coordination. Delegates also adopted decisions related to, *inter alia*, the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) at the global level.

WSSD: The WSSD was held from 26 August - 4 September 2002, in Johannesburg, South Africa. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) sets out a framework for action to implement the commitments originally agreed at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. The JPOI, among other things, emphasized that the international community should fully implement the outcomes of decision SS.VII/1 on IEG.

GC-22/GMEF: This meeting took place from 3-7 February 2003, in Nairobi, Kenya. Delegates adopted more than 40 decisions on issues relating to IEG, post-conflict environmental assessment, UNEP's water policy and strategy, SAICM, a mercury programme, support to Africa, production and consumption patterns, and the environment and cultural diversity.

GCSS-8/GMEF: This meeting took place from 29-31 March 2004, in Jeju, Republic of Korea. At the conclusion of the ministerial consultations, delegates adopted the "Jeju Initiative," containing the Chair's summary of the discussions and decisions on: small island developing states; waste management; water resource management; regional annexes; and the implementation of decision SS.VII/1 on IEG.

GC-23/GMEF: This meeting took place from 21-25 February 2005, in Nairobi, Kenya. Ministers adopted decisions on, among other things: the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building; IEG; chemicals management; UNEP's water policy and strategy; gender equality and the environment; poverty and the environment; and strengthening environmental emergency response and developing disaster prevention, preparedness, mitigation and early warning systems.

GCSS-9/GMEF: This meeting was held from 7-9 February 2006, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Ministerial consultations addressed, *inter alia*, policy issues relating to energy and the environment, chemicals management, and tourism and the environment. The plenary discussions on environmental governance and GC universal membership did not produce an agreed outcome, and delegates decided that the report of the meeting should reflect the divergence of views expressed.

GC-24/GMEF: This meeting convened from 5-9 February 2007, in Nairobi, Kenya. Delegates adopted 15 decisions on issues relating to, *inter alia*: chemicals, including a provision to establish the *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Working Group to Review and Assess Measures to Address the Global Issue of Mercury; the world environment situation; IEG; South-South cooperation; waste management; 2010-2020 UN Decade for Deserts and the Fight Against Desertification; UNEP's updated water policy and strategy; and support to Africa in environmental management and protection.

GCSS-10/GMEF: Convening in Monaco from 20-22 February 2008, ministerial consultations addressed the emerging policy issues of mobilizing finance to meet the climate challenge, and IEG and UN reform. The GC/GMEF adopted five decisions on: the UNEP Medium-term Strategy 2010-2013; chemicals management, including mercury and waste management; the Global Environment Outlook; sustainable development of the Arctic region; and the International Decade for Combating Climate Change.

GC-25/GMEF: GC-25/GMEF convened from 16-20 February 2009 in Nairobi, Kenya. The GC/GMEF adopted 17 decisions on issues relating to, *inter alia*: chemicals management, including mercury; the world environment situation; environmental law; and an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services (IPBES). Decision 25/4 on IEG established a regionally representative, consultative group of ministers or high-level representatives. The decision requested the group to present a set of options for improving IEG to GCSS-11/GMEF with a view to providing input to the UN General Assembly.

GCSS-11/GMEF: GCSS-11/GMEF convened from 24-26 February 2010 in Bali, Indonesia, and adopted eight decisions on: IEG; enhanced coordination across the UN, including the Environment Management Group; a follow-up report on the environmental situation in Gaza; IPBES; strengthening the environmental response in Haiti; oceans; a consultative process on financing options for chemicals and wastes; and environmental law.

GC-26/GMEF: This meeting took place from 21-24 February 2011 at the UN Office at Nairobi, Kenya. Seventeen decisions were adopted on issues relating to, *inter alia*, chemicals and waste management; the world environment situation; IEG; IPBES; South-South cooperation; and strengthening international cooperation for environmental crisis response.

GCSS-12/GMEF REPORT

On Monday morning, 20 February, Graciela Muslera, Minister for Housing, Land Planning and Environment, Uruguay, and Acting President of the GC/GMEF, opened the meeting, calling on governments to address chemicals and waste management at the upcoming Rio+20 conference. Supporting institutional

strengthening, she urged delegates to use Rio+20 to address social, environmental and economic challenges, and redouble their commitment to the mercury negotiations.

On behalf of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Amb. Amina Mohamed, Deputy Executive Director, UNEP, emphasized that scaling up the green economy is a process that has been "incubating for 40 years." Speaking on the institutional framework for sustainable development (IFSD), she noted the challenge of "connecting the dots" between, *inter alia*, food security, water provision and management, climate change, inequality, and women's empowerment, and called for clear, practical, science-based outcomes from Rio+20 to "achieve the future we want."

Joan Clos, Executive Director, UN-HABITAT, drew attention to joint efforts of UNEP and UN-HABITAT, including: promoting low-carbon housing, streamlining urban mobility and urban public transport, tackling the challenges of climate change in the Pacific, and scaling up green economy ideals in the development and management of urban areas.

Sahle-Work Zewde, Director-General, UNON, affirmed UNON's efficiency, cost-effectiveness and commitment to "delivering as one."

Henri Djombo, Minister of Sustainable Development, Forestry and the Environment, Republic of Congo, emphasized the region's support for the green economy, and called for transforming UNEP into a specialized agency based in Nairobi, with a decision-making system representing all states, ensuring consistency and coherence in the administration of MEAs.

In his opening remarks, UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner described the meeting as both a view towards Rio+20 and a review of Stockholm+40, and acknowledged the presence of three of four former UNEP Executive Directors.

Mwai Kibaki, President of Kenya, highlighted that the meeting offers a unique opportunity to build consensus on the outcome of Rio+20. Noting that the transition towards green development requires strong institutions, he stressed the need for reforming IEG. He called on the GCSS-12/GMEF to support the African Union's (AU) common position on transforming UNEP into a "specialized institution for the environment" based in Nairobi.

The GCSS-12/GMEF elected Federico Ramos de Armas, (Spain), President of the GC. László Borbély (Romania), and Dana Kartakusuma, (Indonesia), were elected Vice-Presidents. Delegates adopted the agenda and the organization of work (UNEP/GCSS.XII/1/Add.1/Rev.1). Delegates established a Committee of the Whole (COW) chaired by László Borbély. A "Friends of the President" group to compile recommendations from the ministerial consultations was also established.

Delivering his Policy Statement**,** Achim Steiner highlighted UNEP's role and achievements during the current climate of economic uncertainty and social turmoil. He focused on UNEP's pioneering work in monitoring the state of the environment, the science/policy interface, climate change and support for MEAs. He outlined UNEP's progression from focusing on the physical environment to a new phase, embracing equity, social justice and sustainability. Steiner emphasized UNEP's contribution to strengthening the links between the three pillars of sustainable development and to the preparatory process for Rio+20. In this connection he highlighted the concept of a green economy and the growing role of UNEP in the UN system.

Amb. Geert Aagaard (Denmark) presented seven draft decisions prepared by the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) (UNEP/GCSS.XII/L.1). He highlighted matters for consideration, including: whether or not a decision on IEG should be linked to the Rio+20 "zero draft" document; adoption of a 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production; and providing a mandate to the Executive Director to continue facilitating a process for integrated financing of chemicals and waste.

Switzerland introduced a draft "UNEP at 40" declaration, pointing out that the aim was not to preempt any decisions, but to send a clear ministerial message underlining the need to strengthen environmental action. Denmark, on behalf of the European Union (EU) and Croatia, observed that while there have been many significant achievements since Stockholm, the state of the environment has not improved. She noted that more ambitious reforms are needed, and supported proposals to upgrade UNEP to a specialized agency.

Ecuador called for the Rio+20 preparatory process to incorporate input from regional initiatives, citing key issues for the Latin American and Caribbean region as social inclusion, intergenerational solidarity and support for communities affected by natural disasters. Responding to the Swiss proposal, South Africa, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China (G-77/China), India and Brazil, cautioned against introducing new language at this advanced stage as it may hamper progress in the intergovernmental preparatory process for Rio+20.

MINISTERIAL CONSULTATIONS

On Monday, 20 February, ministers and heads of delegation held consultations on the environment and development in a symposium on "environmental change and global response in 2012." On Tuesday morning, 21 February, delegates convened for ministerial consultations in plenary on the "green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication" and on IFSD in the afternoon. Five parallel ministerial round-table discussions also took place on the green economy in the morning and on IFSD in the afternoon. On Wednesday morning, 22 February, a moderated plenary discussion on "Rio+20 and beyond: Responding to the challenges" took place.

EMERGING POLICY ISSUES: ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT: Jacqueline McGlade, European Environment Agency, facilitated a panel discussion with several environment ministers on the fifth Global Environment Outlook (GEO 5) report. In a keynote address, Sir Robert Watson, Chief Scientific Advisor, UK, prioritized: internalizing economic externalities; SCP; and educating girls and empowering women.

The Secretariat introduced GEO 5. Razan Khalifa Al Mubarak, Secretary-General, Abu Dhabi Environment Agency, emphasized the need for reliable data, noting this could be "a less contentious starting point" for collective action. Izabella Teixeira, Minister of Environment, Brazil, proposed adopting sustainability as a value, linked democracy to sustainable

development, and called for an inclusive green economy approach. Yoo Young Sook, Minister of Environment, Republic of Korea, outlined a national policy of low-carbon green growth, proposing to play a bridging role between developed and developing countries. Mercedes Bresso, President, EU Committee of the Regions, proposed that Rio+20 should capitalize on experiences, including: a convention on access to information on the environment and public participation; decentralized data collection and disaggregation to the local level; and voluntary, measurable commitments implemented in partnership with local communities.

In a second keynote address, Lena Ek, Minister for Environment, Sweden, called for strengthening UNEP, and greater cooperation and collaboration among UN agencies.

In a third keynote address, Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Secretary-General, African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) group, highlighted the Cotonou Agreement, which provides ACP countries a platform to leverage financial resources to scale up green economy policies and programmes.

In a session moderated by Achim Steiner, former UNEP Executive Directors Mostafa Tolba, Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Klaus Toepfer, and Maurice Strong (in writing) offered their views regarding Rio+20. Tolba called for a concrete methodology to achieve sustainable development goals, lamenting non-compliance and lack of funding support as major weaknesses. Dowdeswell highlighted the value of UNEP's scientific work and emphasized the need to halt continuing discussion about governance in order to deal with "the real issues." Toepfer suggested there could be many pathways to sustainable development, and that UNEP should lead this discussion. Strong called for Rio+20 to support a higher status for UNEP, stating that radical changes to the economic system require an unprecedented degree of cooperation.

GREEN ECONOMY IN THE CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY ERADICATION: UNCSD Secretary-General Sha Zukang introduced the discussion document (UNEP/GCSS.XII/13/Add.1), reminding delegates that adopting "green economy" as a Rio+20 theme had been a General Assembly decision that offers potential to integrate the economic, environmental and social pillars of sustainable development.

Keynote speaker Elliott Harris, International Monetary Fund, observed that a green economy bridges the divide between economic and environmental policy by building on the strengths of the market-based economy, and must be supported by a more coherent institutional framework that includes better ways of measuring progress. He emphasized the need for a whole-of-government approach, noting that many relevant policies can be adopted without waiting for external financing.

During the panel discussion, Edna Molewa, Minister for Water and Environmental Affairs, South Africa, recommended enhancing public-private partnerships; strengthening the evidence bases for a green economy model; and ensuring solid fiscal policies to bolster the transition to a green economy. Janez Potočnik, European Commissioner for Environment, called for mobilization of funds from non-traditional sources to facilitate a smooth transition to a green economy, particularly in the developing world. Najib Saab, Secretary-General, Arab Forum for Environment and Development, described the recently launched "Arab Green Economy Report," which predicts large-scale employment creation and public savings through such a transition.

During roundtable sessions, ministers discussed opportunities and challenges in their countries in pursuing a smooth and socially just transition to a green economy. Ministers highlighted the need for socially inclusive, pro-growth policies, expressing particular interest in: research and development for innovation; food security; sustainable urban areas; drought mitigation policies and impacts on smallholder farmers; fair and equitable access to resources; women, youth, and indigenous communities; clear and flexible regulatory frameworks; training and capacity building in the transition period; indicators of progress; shared responsibility for good governance, and public participation. Many stressed that a green economy model must go beyond gross domestic product (GDP) as an indicator for growth. Ministers reiterated the need for a clear definition of "green economy," and not a prescriptive "one-size-fits-all" approach. They also called for the establishment of measurable indicators to monitor the green economy, taking into account individual country specificities. Some delegates further highlighted the need for a green economy to take into account oceans and fisheries, and the importance of safeguarding the health of indigenous peoples.

IFSD: Erik Solheim, Minister of the Environment and International Development, Norway, moderated the session and introduced the background paper (UNEP/GCSS.XII/13/Add.2). Keynote speaker Zakri Abdul Hamid, scientific advisor to the Malaysian Prime Minister and Co-Chair of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, noted a "rare convergence" of conditions for a consensus on global reform for sustainable development. He indicated that about 120 countries have endorsed establishing UNEP as a specialized agency, emphasizing that its focus should be on helping member states meet their environmental commitments, and affirming that governance reform would nurture a robust, green economy.

Manuel Pulgar-Vidal, Minister of Environment, Peru, supported the call to transform UNEP into a specialized agency, noting that the current system of governance includes many binding agreements, but without the systems to monitor and enforce implementation.

Henri Djombo, Minister of Sustainable Development, Forestry and the Environment, Republic of Congo, called for a specialized agency on environment that would provide financial, technical and scientific support to developing countries. He stressed that "this kind of architecture" would best coordinate all MEAs, stating that UNEP's current mandate is not broad enough to fulfill this function. Doris Leuthard, Minister for Environment, Switzerland, noted that a combination of assessed contributions, voluntary contributions and private sector funding are imperative to the running of a new "anchor institution" that would enhance oversight and coordination of MEAs.

Calling for a move towards a programmatic approach to "system-wide synergies" among environment convention secretariats, John Scanlon, Secretary-General, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), supported the establishment of a larger agency coordinating efforts among MEAs. He also called for a reform of the Global Environment Facility that would see it focus on national-level implementation of international agreements as well as provide support to all MEAs, including CITES.

During roundtable discussions, some delegates favored establishing UNEP as a specialized agency, calling for: an institution with a strong mandate, political visibility and universal membership; effective use of resources; strengthening the scientific basis for decision making; and improving the science/policy interface. Others dissented, calling instead for "strengthening" UNEP, with some emphasizing that UNEP should remain the "voice of the environment" and not broaden its scope into sustainable development as a whole.

RIO+20 AND BEYOND: RESPONDING TO THE CHALLENGES: Stephen Kalonzo Musyoka, Vice-President, Kenya, noted that Rio+20 gives the world an opportunity to address cross-cutting challenges including food security, climate change, rapid urbanization, population growth, and unsustainable consumption and production patterns. Highlighting the country's vision for 2030, he called for agreement on an elevated and strengthened environment organization based in Nairobi.

Calling for renewed commitments from both developed and developing countries, keynote speaker Sha Zukang, UNCSD Secretary-General, highlighted five elements that the final outcome document at Rio+20 should feature: reaffirmation of commitment to sustainable development; agreement on a green economy; the launch of a process towards a strong IFSD; agreement on indicators to measure the implementation of sustainable development goals; and concrete action or the launch of processes on specific initiatives. These initiatives are: a framework agreement on sustainable development; support for the Secretary-General's Sustainable Energy for All Initiative; a framework for marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction; the establishment of a social protection floor for the most vulnerable; and the launch of a report on sustainable development.

Moderator Mark Halle, International Institute for Sustainable Development, cautioned that if the opportunity presented at Rio+20 to move forward on a new economic model is not taken, the world will return to the model "that has not served us well." He observed that a transition to a green economy depends on having the necessary institutional mandates, structure and coherence.

In the panel discussion, Ida Auken, Environment Minister, Denmark, emphasized the need to integrate the three pillars of sustainable development "like strands of DNA." She suggested the urgency of resource scarcity be highlighted, in order to build wide support for sustainable development, adding that cities could showcase initiatives providing environmental, economic and social benefits.

Rhoda Peace Tumusiime, Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, AU, highlighted natural disasters and scarcity on the continent. She called for the Rio conference to set measurable targets, adding that African heads of state have affirmed their commitment to transforming UNEP as an institution.

Kerri-Ann Jones, Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, US, called for Rio+20 to develop partnerships with non-state actors, and to recognize the central role of data and connective technologies for environmental monitoring and management, including by entrepreneurs and citizens.

Adriana Soto, Vice-Minister for Environment, Colombia, called for goals with concrete actions benefiting grassroots people. She highlighted the need for social as well as environmental indicators, citing deforestation and extreme weather events as examples of issues requiring alliances between farmers, a broad range of actors.

In discussion, the EU called for clarity on targets, actions and timeframes, reminding delegates that institutional reform should include international financial institutions and the global trade system. He emphasized the need for active participation of all major groups. Brazil reiterated calls for Rio+20 to produce action-oriented outcomes.

To guide discussions at Rio+20, China and Egypt highlighted the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. Iran proposed a fourth pillar of sustainable development: sustainable peace and tranquility. A Major Groups representative of an interfaith coalition suggested delegates be guided by the principles of the Earth Charter, calling for justice and equity for people and the planet.

Ghana, Nigeria, Uganda and Mexico supported strengthening UNEP, with Mexico also calling for strengthening of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

Afghanistan highlighted the importance of gender equality. A Major Groups representative of women called for strong and binding safeguards for women and indigenous communities.

Senegal and South Sudan highlighted domestic challenges of drought, climate impacts and environmental damage.

Moderator Mark Halle summarized the morning's discussion, noting consensus on the need to raise the level of ambition and ensure practical outcomes from the Rio conference. He highlighted recognition of: support needed for action in poorer countries; a changed environment and world situation since 1992; the green economy as a mechanism for integration of various public policy streams; and the need for strengthened governance arrangements to enable the transition to a green economy.

PRESIDENT'S SUMMARY: GC President Ramos de Armas presented the President's summary of the ministerial consultations (UNEP/GCSS.XII/L.3) during the closing plenary on Wednesday, reminding delegates that the summary reflects key messages but not consensus or individual viewpoints. Jamil Ahmad, Secretary of the GC, explained that a change would be reflected in the final version, with reference to a proposal that "highlighted the need that at Rio+20 a decision should be taken on IEG and IFSD."

Bolivia and Venezuela requested that other views expressed during discussion be reflected, including concerns regarding the green economy concept, and a proposal that sustainable development be considered from a more comprehensive viewpoint, not limited to economic and financial considerations. President de Armas took note of the requests.

In the President's Summary, on green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, opportunities were noted in renewable energies, greening of the construction sector, and in women's participation in the local economy, especially in the energy, land management and water sectors. Particular opportunity was noted in reinforcing a shift to SCP, by encouraging redirection of investment with revenues from tax and subsidy reforms, loans, credits and other financial instruments.

Key points were raised in relation to: respecting the Rio Principles, developing a variety of green economy models tailored to differing national and local conditions; a participatory process at all levels including women and youth; defining policies and instruments; coordination across government agencies; and obligations of the international community towards developing countries in financing, capacity building, and development of institutional and regulatory frameworks. Participants suggested that UNEP facilitate goal-setting based on existing international commitments such as the Millennium Development Goals, as well as targets for gender mainstreaming and measurement of well-being "beyond GDP."

On IFSD, discussion reflected that incremental reform has been too slow and has not addressed the nature or severity of environmental issues, but there remain questions as to the exact architecture of a reformed environmental governance system. Delegates stressed that there should be a clear decision on the IFSD and IEG at Rio+20.

The President's Summary reflects that opportunities for reform of the system may include: an anchor organization with universal membership; improving the science/policy interface; coordinating and enhancing synergies among MEA clusters; developing a UN system-wide system of prioritization and division of labor; linking private investment and public policy; and a system of assessed contributions for the IEG anchor institution to increase the volume of available resources.

On Rio+20 and beyond, key points were raised regarding the need for environment ministers to engage with finance, planning and development ministries, and for collective measures of wealth to go beyond GDP. Delegates were in favor of governments committing to robust accountability, with concrete monitoring mechanisms and transparent decision-making.

UNEP 40TH ANNIVERSARY MINISTERIAL STATEMENT: In the Ministerial Statement (UNEP/GCSS.XII/L.4), ministers congratulate UNEP on its successes, including the establishment of MEAs; the development of environmental laws and policy; the findings of key scientific assessments; and stronger environmental awareness at all levels. Ministers recall previous commitment to strengthening the role of UNEP as the leading global environmental authority and advocate, as set out in the Nairobi Declaration of 1997, and recognize the GEO as an important synthesis of scientific information.

Ministers pledge to: strengthen actions to reverse environmental degradation; promote a holistic approach to sustainable development; and contribute to the conservation of essential natural resources and ecosystems. Ministers welcome the UNCSD as a unique opportunity to address the economic, social, and environmental challenges in the context of sustainable development.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

The COW, chaired by László Borbély (Romania), convened from Monday to Wednesday to consider agenda items under the theme "environment and development." The COW considered six draft decisions prepared by the CPR (UNEP/GCSS.XII/L.1): IEG; world environment situation; SCP; consultative process on financing options for chemicals and wastes; enhancing cooperation and coordination with the chemicals and wastes cluster; and accounting, financial and administrative arrangements between UNEP and the MEAs. The COW approved seven decisions, which were forwarded to the plenary for adoption.

PROGRESS REPORTS: On Tuesday, the Secretariat introduced four progress reports on UNEP's work on chemicals and waste management (UNEP/GCSS.XII/5 and 6); UNEP's water policy and strategy (UNEP/GCSS.XII/12); and the Manila Declaration on Furthering the Implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (UNEP/GCSS.XII/INF/10).

In the ensuing discussion, Turkey noted that transboundary water management falls outside the remit of UNEP and, supported by the US, asked for a copy of the draft mid-term strategy document to be sent to member states for their input. The EU and Croatia emphasized the need to include water resources in an ecosystem approach.

The US welcomed the joint proposal by UNEP and several UN agencies to co-host the IPBES Secretariat. Argentina stressed the need for IPBES decision-making processes to be non-prescriptive and based on consensus.

Delegates took note of the progress reports.

GCSS-11/GMEF DECISIONS

IEG: The Secretariat introduced this draft decision in the COW (UNEP/GCSS.XII/3) on Tuesday and it was subsequently taken up by the COW subcommittee on IEG-related draft decisions, chaired by Tonatiuh Romero (Mexico), which negotiated the text on Tuesday and Wednesday.

During a brief discussion, the EU welcomed progress on incremental reform and encouraged further progress on transforming UNEP into a UN specialized agency. The US expressed support for strengthening of the environmental pillar, but cautioned against prejudging the outcome of Rio+20. The contentious issues centered on the question of incremental versus broader reforms, and to what extent they should be highlighted or defined in the decision. The authority of the Executive Director to undertake further reform was also touched

upon. Delegates expressed different views on whether IEG is an "important" or "key" component of the IFSD discussion in the run up to Rio+20. Proposals were made to invite biodiversity-related conventions to launch a synergistic process, but were opposed.

During discussions on the draft COW report, delegates debated the use of "many" in a reference to delegates' support for the upgrading of UNEP into a specialized agency of the UN System. Noting that only a few governments had intervened on this issue, the US, supported by the Russian Federation, India and Iran, called for the report to accurately reflect discussions at the session by referring to "broad support" for the "strengthening of UNEP." However, Kenya, Nigeria and several African delegates, reiterating the AU Summit resolution on this issue, stressed that the 54 member countries represented a substantial number of countries. This view was endorsed by the EU and Croatia, with support from Chile. Several African countries, including Egypt, Kenya, Nigeria, Algeria and Congo, later clarified the African position, noting that the AU calls for UNEP to be upgraded into an "international specialized institution" without prejudging what form it should take, in order to facilitate further consultations on this issue. Delegates finally agreed on compromise language reflecting the two main positions: "many governments voiced support for the upgrading of UNEP" and "other governments argued that changing UNEP to a UN specialized agency could result in weakening it."

***Final Decision*:** In the decision on IEG (UNEP/GCSS.XII/L.2/Add.2), the GC takes note of the implementation by the Executive Director of incremental reforms identified in the Set of Options presented by the Consultative Group of Ministers or High-level Representatives on IEG, and of on-going consultations for Rio+20 on IFSD. It recalls the commitment set out in the Nusa Dua Declaration of 2010 to strengthen the role of UNEP as the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, that promotes coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the UN system, and that serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment. The GC:

- recognizes the importance of enhancing synergies, including at the national and regional levels, among the biodiversity-related conventions;
- invites the Executive Director to undertake further activities to improve the effectiveness and cooperation among MEAs, taking into account their autonomous decision-making authority, and to explore opportunities for further synergies in the administrative functions of the MEA secretariats administered by UNEP;
- calls upon governments and stakeholders to provide the necessary funding, technical assistance and capacity building to fully implement the Bali Strategic Plan, and invites the General Assembly to examine the possibility of developing a system-wide framework for its implementation;
- invites the General Assembly to examine the possibility of developing a system-wide strategy for the environment; and
- encourages member states to provide, on a voluntary basis, extrabudgetary funding to strengthen UNEP regional offices.

ENHANCED COORDINATION ACROSS THE UN SYSTEM, INCLUDING THE ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT GROUP (EMG): This item (UNEP/GCSS.XII/10) was introduced in the COW on Tuesday and discussed by the subcommittee on IEG-related issues on Tuesday evening.

The US noted that this is a good example of UN system-wide collaboration. The EU and Croatia, opposed by Brazil, proposed new language inviting the Executive Director to allocate additional resources in the 2014-2015 programme period to enhance EMG staff capacity.

***Final Decision*:** In the final decision on enhanced coordination across the UN system, including the EMG (UNEP/GCSS.XII/CW/L.2), the GC, *inter alia*:

- recognizes UNEP's role in enhancing coordination and collaboration across the UN system to achieve greater coherence in environmental activities;
- encourages the EMG to continue to promote coherence in environmental activities across the UN system, including by mainstreaming environmental concerns into sectoral programmes such as the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020; a UN system-wide action plan for the period 2012–2018 as a follow-up to the EMG report on drylands; and the framework for transitioning towards environmental sustainability management systems and climate neutrality in the UN; and
- requests the Executive Director to provide a progress report on the Group's work to the 27th session of the GC/GMEF; and
- invites the Executive Director to submit, for consideration of the CPR, proposals about the allocation of resources for the EMG's activities to better reflect the workload of the EMG Secretariat.

WORLD ENVIRONMENTAL SITUATION: This item (UNEP/GCSS.XII/4 and INF/2, 6 and 9), was introduced by the Secretariat in the COW on Tuesday and was further taken up by the open-ended drafting group on Tuesday. The Secretariat highlighted the UNEP Yearbook Findings for 2012 and presented the GEO 5 summary for policy makers and UNEP Live, which focuses on creating and sharing knowledge for environmental assessment.

Renate Christ, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), provided a progress report on recent IPCC activities and decisions taken regarding reforms and the governing structure. She outlined two special reports on: renewable energy sources and climate change mitigation; and managing risks of extreme events and disasters to advance climate change adaptation.

Razan Khalifa Al Mubarak, Abu Dhabi Environment Agency, provided an overview of the Eye on Earth Summit and requested GCSS-12 to endorse the Eye on Earth Declaration, which had been the main outcome.

The EU expressed appreciation for improvements to the GEO report and encouraged UNEP to strengthen the GEO process and ensure that findings are based on official sources. Noting that environmental data-based monitoring is a continuous, long-term process, the US said national governments need to improve science-based systems that generate this data.

In the afternoon, Sudan, on behalf of the League of Arab States, introduced a draft decision in support of the outcome of the Eye on Earth Summit in Abu Dhabi in December 2011 (UNEP/GCSS.XII/INF/6).

***Final Decision*:** In the final decision on the world environmental situation (UNEP/GCSS.XII/CW/L.3/Add.1), parties note with great concern the severe changes that have taken place in the environment, ranging from the impact of climate change, the loss of biodiversity and species extinction to the degradation of land and the deterioration of the water resources and oceans. The GC, *inter alia*:

- recognizes that the transition to sustainable development varies by country and must be addressed by well-governed, effectively managed, innovative, results-oriented institutions, able to create appropriate conditions for change;
- calls upon governments and other stakeholders to work with UNEP and other environmental institutions to integrate science-based environmental information, including from global, regional and national assessments, in the preparatory process for the UNCSD;
- requests the Executive Director to prioritize assistance to developing countries and countries with economies in transition to strengthen their capacities to collect and analyze data and information and monitor environmental trends, as stipulated in the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Transfer and Capacity-building, and making information available to policy makers and the public in an open-access format, such as UNEP-Live;
- further requests the Executive Director, through the programme of work, to build capacity and support technology transfer for developing countries and countries with economies in transition, within the framework of the Bali Strategic Plan; and
- takes note of the outcome of the first Eye on Earth Summit in Abu Dhabi and the commitment of the United Arab Emirates government to facilitate and support the special initiatives contained in the Eye on Earth Declaration, particularly the Global Network of Networks Initiative,

SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION: On Tuesday, following an introduction by the Secretariat, the COW embarked on a first reading of this draft decision (UNEP/GCSS.XII/7). Further negotiation of the text was taken up by an open-ended drafting group chaired by Kerstin Stendhal (Finland), which met until late on Tuesday and on Wednesday morning.

A Major Groups' representative emphasized that scaling up the 10-Year Framework of Programmes (10 FYP) requires linkages to regional and national initiatives, and called for explicit reference to cooperation with civil society and other stakeholders. The EU and Croatia requested a reference to agreed language in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the Marrakesh process on SCP. A number of countries cautioned against reopening language agreed in the UN Commission on Sustainable Development's Fourth Implementation Cycle (2010-2011) to facilitate adoption at Rio+20. Several delegates also called for removal of references to "in particular developed countries," stressing that SCP is a responsibility of all countries. Argentina, supported by India and Egypt, proposed new text calling on governments to support the adoption of the 10FYP.

***Final Decision*:** In the final decision on UNEP's work on SCP (UNEP/GCSS.XII/CW/L.3/Add.2), the GC makes reference to several multilateral initiatives, including the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the Marrakech Process. Parties note that while the 2010-2011 cycle of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development did not result in the adoption of a decision on SCP it did indicate the readiness of the international community to take action to accelerate the shift towards SCP, and to establish a 10FYP. Parties further note that resource efficiency and SCP together constitute one of the six cross-cutting priorities of the UNEP medium-term strategy for the period 2010-2013.

The GC requests the Executive Director to, *inter alia*:

- enhance support for the development and implementation of the resource efficiency/SCP sub-programme;
- make use of the scientific and policy knowledge base and relevant international science-policy mechanisms, including the International Resource Panel; and
- submit a report on SCP in light of the outcome of the Rio+20 on the implementation of the present decision to the 27th session of the GC in 2013.

CONSULTATIVE PROCESS ON FINANCING OPTIONS FOR CHEMICALS AND WASTES: This agenda item (UNEP/GCSS.XII/8 and INF/7 and 8) was introduced in the COW on Monday. It was also considered by the open-ended contact group on draft decisions, chaired by Kerstin Stendahl on Tuesday. In the COW, the EU, Norway and Switzerland supported the focus on an integrated financing approach and called for a full proposal to be elaborated in time for the Third International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM3). China opposed linking this process to the mercury negotiations, as these are at a crucial stage. Brazil, Cuba, Argentina and the US noted the proposals were premature and called for continued consultations to secure more predictable and sustainable funding. Iraq noted that priorities should emerge from the SAICM process. Japan highlighted the need for a multi-stakeholder mid-term review of the SAICM quick start programme and called for the approach to be further elaborated at ICCM3.

Final Decision: In the final decision (UNEP/GCSS.XII/CW/L.3), the GC, *inter alia*:

- takes note of the Co-Chairs' summary of the finance and technical assistance contact group from the first meeting of the Open-ended Working Group of the ICCM that considered possible long-term financing options for SAICM, including "elements of the integrated approach" related to the Approach;
- recognizes that the on-going negotiations on a legally-binding instrument on mercury, including its financing mechanisms, is a "parallel process" that should not be delayed or prejudged by the process on financing options for the sound management of chemicals and wastes, and invites the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to consider the outcome of the consultative process as it prepares a global legally-binding instrument on mercury; and

- encourages governments and other relevant stakeholders to take into consideration the integrated approach, and the outcome document and report of the Executive Director in preparing for Rio+20.

ENHANCING COOPERATION AND COORDINATION WITH THE CHEMICALS AND WASTES CLUSTER: Delegates considered this item (UNEP/GCSS.XII/11) together with the item on financing chemicals.

Final Decision: In the final decision (UNEP/GCSS.XII/CW/L.3), the GC, *inter alia*:

- notes the adoption of decisions taken by the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions on enhancing cooperation and coordination among those conventions;
- reiterates its request to the Executive Director to facilitate and support an inclusive, country-driven, consultative process on the challenges and options for further enhancing long-term cooperation and coordination in the chemicals and wastes cluster; and
- invites the participants at Rio+20 to promote the importance of sound management of chemicals and wastes for human health and the environment.

BUDGET AND PROGRAMME OF WORK INCLUDING FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN UNEP AND MEAS: This item (UNEP/GCSS.XII/9 and Add.1) was introduced in the COW on Tuesday and discussed by the subcommittee on IEG-related decisions in the afternoon.

Supporting the draft decision, Japan emphasized enhanced efficiency through information sharing and programme collaboration, particularly at the regional level. The US noted that the Secretariat's report did not fully adhere to the GC-26 decision on this issue and that additional efficiency gains can be made in MEA back-office delivery. With support from the EU and Croatia, Norway and Switzerland, the US favored undertaking a systematic review of each MEA to solicit a more detailed analysis. The G-77/China, supported by India, Argentina, Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador, opposed referring to the green economy, noting that it is an undefined concept that is under negotiation in the UNCSD. The EU and Croatia, with Switzerland, objected, noting the intention is to encourage discussions to gain a better understanding of the concept. Noting that the Rio+20 agenda has been decided in a consultative process, Mexico cautioned against introducing language that might convey the impression that the agenda is still open for discussion.

Final Decision: In the final decision on accountability and financial and administrative arrangements between UNEP and MEAs (UNEP/GCSS.XII/CW/L.2), the GC requests the Executive Director to report to GC-27/GMEF on the full implementation of paragraph 18 of decision 26/9 with a view to examining how to further strengthen the cooperation and coordination between UNEP and the relevant MEAs. The GC further emphasizes the need to consult with the relevant MEA secretariats, the UN Board of Auditors, the Office of Legal Affairs and all relevant bodies, on the legal bases of accountability issues and the financial and administrative arrangements.

CLOSING PLENARY

GCSS-12/GMEF President Federico Ramos de Armas opened the closing plenary, expressing sadness and conveying condolences for the passing of Kenya's Environment Minister John Michuki. He described the late Michuki as "a great friend of the environment and a firm proponent of the protection of the planet." Delegates then observed a minute's silence in memory of John Michuki.

Ramos de Armas presented the summary report of the ministerial consultations (UNEP/GCSS/12/L.3) and the UNEP 40th Anniversary Ministerial Statement (UNEP/GCSS.XII/L.4), which delegates adopted.

COW Chair László Borbély presented the COW report (UNEP/GCSS/CW/L.1), which delegates approved. Delegates adopted decisions (UNEP/GCSS.XII/CW/L.1, L.2 and Add.1, L.3 and Add.1 and Add.3) on: accounting, financial and administrative arrangements between UNEP and the MEAs; enhancing cooperation and coordination with the chemicals and wastes cluster; consultative process on financing options for chemicals and wastes; world environmental situation; IEG; and SCP. Borbély expressed satisfaction with delegates' cooperation, commitment and understanding.

Delegates adopted the report of the meeting (UNEP/GCSS.XII/L.2), with minor amendments and approved the oral report on credentials.

In closing statements, the EU emphasized that any decisions agreed at Rio+20 must be backed by roadmaps or by a framework for action in order to promote and further develop actions in specific sectors, as well as by tools to measure progress. He also called for strengthening IEG as part of the broader institutional framework for IFSD. He noted strong support for strengthening UNEP and for transforming it into a UN specialized agency for the environment.

Chile expressed support for proposals to transform the status of UNEP into a specialized agency.

Children and Youth, speaking for Major Groups, demanded strong decisions at Rio+20, noting that great challenges have to be overcome and the need for a strong mandate for UNEP.

Commenting on the "UNEP at 40" anniversary ministerial statement, Switzerland observed that it is not as specific as it should be and does not send as clear a message as many wanted, although it was "the best" that could have been achieved in the little time available.

Kenya conveyed appreciation for condolences received, observing that the late John Michuki had championed environmental sustainability with passion and success. She reiterated Kenya's commitment to hosting UNEP, noting that upgrading UNEP in Nairobi would be beneficial for leadership and direction on IEG.

Achim Steiner praised delegates for their efforts towards achieving the session's objectives. He underscored the "voice of science" as central to UNEP's work, noting that the 40th

anniversary celebrations were also a reflection of all that had been accomplished, observing that social justice and equity are no longer separate from the environment.

GC President Ramos de Armas noted that delegates had successfully concluded their work, but pointed out that strengthening collaboration and access to information as well as the role of civil society without a valid scientific basis would be difficult. He then gaveled the meeting to a close at 7:25 pm.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF GCSS-12/GMEF

As UNEP celebrates its 40th anniversary, delegates at the 12th Special Session of its governing body, the GC/GMEF, paid tribute to an impressive record. UNEP has earned its place as a world renowned environmental authority, providing guidance for the activities of governments, civil society, and members of the UN family, offering expertise, vision and policy options for decision makers.

Recently, it became a prime mover for preparations for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD or Rio+20). Along these lines UNEP aligned its agenda with the preparatory process. While ministers and UN officials at GCSS-12/GMEF debated emerging global challenges and responses, their main attention was drawn to two Rio+20 themes: the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and the institutional framework for sustainable development (IFSD). These themes shaped both the session's format and its outcomes.

This GC was perhaps the biggest gathering of ministers before the UNCSD in June or as one delegate termed it, "the last ministerial spurt before Rio." As such, the roundtables and symposia were planned to maximize UNEP's link to Rio, and judging by delegates' reactions, they achieved that goal. The question is how did the session contribute to UNCSD preparations? It is from this perspective that this brief analysis examines the proceedings in Nairobi.

UNEP IN THE CONTEXT OF GREEN ECONOMY

The Special Session (and, in fact, the preparatory process for Rio+20) took up the theme of the green economy at an inopportune moment. The backdrop is the economic and financial crisis that has led to a sharp decline in public trust in government institutions and business. On the eve of the GC session, the President of Brazil spoke of "a dissonance between the voice of the markets and the voice of the streets." Protest actions by angry citizens are putting old maxims to a severe test by questioning the basic tenets of the capitalist market economy. The crisis solutions offered by some governments are aggravating youth unemployment and social equity thus rendering a blow to sustainable development policies the same governments profess. A dangerous revisionist trend has appeared, demonstrated by recent attacks by a number of US politicians on Agenda 21.

The world economic situation has made the theme of green economy increasingly relevant while at the same time, politically unpalatable. Many interventions at the GC confirmed that suspicions persist, in particular that green economy may impede the national right to follow an independent path of development, and its "unbalanced message" is more attuned to the requirements of the developed world. According to a participant, the problem is not, as appeared from the discussions, a lack of shared understanding on the definition. Rather, it reflects a deep rooted fear on the part of some developing and developed countries that the green economy will involve additional cost (as admitted by the proponents) and may lead to trade restrictions and other conditionalities. Explanations that there will "initially" be high costs, followed by a bright future, fail to convince. In fact, it has been noticed that negotiators have been gnawing away at the concept and are diluting it as much as possible before final outcomes are adopted in Rio. GCSS-12/GMEF failed to resolve the fears completely.

The ministerial discussions were largely a repetition of well-known arguments. India, China, Russia and the ALBA Group remained among the main doubters. Others, including the US, expressed serious reservations on green economy "road maps," timetables and deadlines. European Union delegates and the UNCSD Secretariat tried hard to make a convincing case, describing a green economy model that links battling poverty and unemployment with environmental sustainability and changed consumption and production patterns. They emphasized the voluntary nature of commitments as a set of options from which countries can pick and choose. Emphasis was made on inclusiveness and maintaining a balance among the three pillars of sustainable development, without prejudice to social equity.

At the same time, the discussions confirmed UNEP's foresight and leadership on the green economy issue (in line with its catalytic role), and the new GEO-5 report was lauded for this very reason. UNEP has demonstrated its tenacity in justifying green economy as an important tool for changing consumption and production patterns and advancing sustainable development. Some delegates noted that in the process UNEP has transcended its environmental mandate but it would probably not remain the custodian of the green economy issue, particularly if a new central home is found in Rio in the context of a new IFSD.

UNEP IN THE CONTEXT OF THE IFSD

Strengthening international environmental governance (IEG) has been a staple on UNEP's agenda for well over a decade. Options, from "incremental" to "broad," have been thoroughly aired at GC and UN General Assembly sessions. But now the IEG discussions have become a key element of the IFSD discussions and the future of UNEP is at the heart of the problem." Two main alternatives have now been defined: (1) upgrading the Governing Council by introducing universal membership and some other measures to strengthen UNEP, and (2) transforming UNEP into a UN specialized agency. Debate in Nairobi repeated the same points raised in previous years. The European Union, led by France and Germany, with support from African countries, argued that only a new agency can overcome the perceived weaknesses of UNEP. These weaknesses are well known: GC decisions can be overturned by the UN General Assembly; lack of universal membership; need

for better financing; no central guidance for MEAs and their fragmentation; and gaps in implementation, to name a few. The list is extensive.

No delegate questioned the need to strengthen UNEP. However, the US, China, India, Russia, Egypt and a few others remained, for various reasons, skeptical about radically changing UNEP's status. Their position may have been expressed by former UNEP Executive Director Mostafa Tolba, who joined other former executive directors at UNEP's birthday celebration. He warned that the specialized agency option will weaken and isolate UNEP, because it will lose its ability to mainstream environment into the UN system. Also, he argued, the new arrangement would require years of negotiation, and would not ensure better funding. This reasoning was shared by a number of participants. The carefully crafted Secretariat background papers and explanations have failed to convince the opponents of a specialized agency. The question remained on several ministers' minds: will fundamental transformation at the center bring perceptible advantage and smooth the complexities of the present regime, including better ways of ensuring coherence among MEAs?

The discussion on IEG was inconclusive. But some saw emerging elements of a compromise: one delegate detected "creeping rectification" of the US position, i.e., a tacit agreement to upgrade UNEP through universal membership. This step has long been on the table, and will only reflect reality: most countries' ministers participate in GC debates irrespective of their membership in the 58-member body. The discussion showed signs of vacillation on the side of the "specialized agency" supporters: several members of the African Union insisted they have opted for an "international specialized institution" rather than a UN specialized agency. Switzerland has been referring to "a strengthened IEG anchor institution."

A number of participants seemed to agree that much depends on how IFSD is handled at Rio. Broader reform of governance institutions can be mutually supportive: if the UNCSD decides to replace the Commission on Sustainable Development with a sustainable development council, then the case for changing UNEP into something new will be bolstered. There seems to be a growing realization that IEG reform cannot stand alone: UNEP's transformation must occur in parallel with installation of a sustainable development structure. Both IEG and IFSD are as interconnected as the pillars of sustainable development; in fact both institutional processes might ensure a better balance among the three pillars. As one delegate observed, both governance processes are bound to rise or fall together.

Admittedly, the form of governance institutions should follow function. But it is also true that a strong psychological yearning for a "fresh start" can be overpowering. In this connection, some participants thought that the EU and UNEP (as a secretariat) may have been "overdoing" the special agency option: it has little chance in view of the "evident intention" of the US and a few others to "block" this project. This is stark reality, and some governments are beginning to seek compromise and realistic solutions for strengthening IEG.

UNEP LOOKS AT RIO

The Special Session was not looking for decisions that would pre-empt or prejudge the Rio+20 outcomes. It was not a meeting of the preparatory committee. UNEP is responsible for one of the pillars of sustainable development and, thus, environmental ministers cannot circumvent political negotiations in New York that address more complex "sustainable development" challenges. Brazil, among others, reminded the GC not to infringe on Rio+20. That seemed the reasoning behind its objection to a Swiss draft of a GC "declaration," which focused on Rio+20 themes. It was later watered down to a brief ministerial "statement" devoted to UNEP's 40th anniversary.

The Governing Council thoroughly aired Rio-related issues and the prevailing differences; it indicated the patterns of debate that may be played out in Rio. No less importantly, it sent a warning signal to capitals that continuing esoteric battles over the meaning of the green economy and the future of IEG may jeopardize the broader set of goals countries will try to adopt in Rio. The discussions in Nairobi have made this much clear: continuing polarization is not a good omen for UNEP or Rio+20. The coming months will show whether this realization will come in time for the Rio conference.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Sixth World Water Forum: This triennial forum will focus on the theme "Solutions for Water." **dates:** 12-17 March 2012 **location:** Marseille, France **contact:** Secretariat **phone:** +33(0)4-95-09-01-40 **email:** secretariat@worldwaterforum.org **www:** http://www.worldwaterforum6.org/

Global Workshop on National Experiences in Implementing the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020: The workshop supports countries updating their national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) in line with the new Strategic Plan and to set national targets in line with the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. **dates:** 12-14 March 2012 **location:** Brasilia, Brazil **contact:** CBD Secretariat **phone**: +1-514-288-2220 **fax:** +1-514-288-6588 **email:** secretariat@cbd.int **www:** http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=WSSPNE-01

Special High-level Meeting of ECOSOC with the Bretton Woods Institutions, WTO and UNCTAD: The meeting will analyze issues of common concern related to the global economy and sustainable development. **dates:** 12-13 March 2012 **location:** New York, US **contact:** UN Financing for Development Office **www:** http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/

GLOBE 2012: This meeting is hosted by the GLOBE Foundation as part of its collaboration with UNEP Finance Initiative (UNEP FI) to offer platforms for thinking, dialogue and action by the worldwide financial services and investment community in preparation for the UNCSD. **dates:** 14-16 March 2012 **location:** Vancouver, Canada **contact:** Globe Foundation **phone:** +1-604-695-5001 **fax:** +1-604-695-5019 **email:** info@globeseries.com **www:** http://2012.globeseries.com/

313th Session of the ILO Governing Body: This session of the Governing Body of the International Labour Organization (ILO) includes an agenda item on "The ILO and the multilateral system: ILO preparations for the Rio+20" that is scheduled to

develop recommendations related to the UNCSD. **dates:** 15-30 March 2012 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **contact:** ILO **phone:** +41-22-799-6111 **fax:** +41-22-798-8685 **email:** ilo@ilo.org **www:** http://www.ilo.org/gb/GBSessions/WCMS_170928/lang--en/index.htm

Global Transition Green Economy Dialogue: Organized by Global Transition 2012, this event will focus on the key themes of the UNCSD "zero draft" document related to the green economy. **dates:** 17-18 March 2012 **location:** New York, US **contact:** Global Transition 2012 **email:** kirstys@stakeholderforum **www:** http://globaltransition2012.org/dialogues/

First "Informal Informal" Negotiations on the UNCSD Draft Outcome Document: Based on the decision taken at the UNCSD Bureau meeting on 22 December 2011, this meeting will be the first "informal informal" negotiations on the zero draft of the outcome document. **dates:** 19-23 March 2012 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UNCSD Secretariat **email:** uncsd2012@un.org **www:** http://www.uncsd2012.org

Third Intersessional Meeting for the UNCSD: The meeting of the UNCSD Preparatory Committee will take place immediately following the informal negotiations. **dates:** 26-27 March 2012 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UNCSD Secretariat **email:** uncsd2012@un.org **www:** http://www.uncsd2012.org/

Planet Under Pressure: New Knowledge Towards Solutions: The conference will discuss solutions to move societies on to a sustainable pathway and provide scientific leadership towards the UNCSD. **dates:** 26-29 March 2012 **location:** London, UK **contact:** Jenny Wang **phone:** +86-10-8520-8796 **email:** Jen.wang@elsevier.com **www:** http://www.planetunderpressure2012.net

High-Level Meeting on Happiness and Well-being: This High-Level Meeting will gather experts to work together to identify the measures, accounts and financial mechanisms required for a happiness-based economic model to be available for incorporation into national policies. The meeting follows UN General Assembly Resolution 65/309, which calls for a "holistic approach to development" aimed at promoting sustainable happiness and wellbeing. **date:** 2 April 2012 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** Claire Bulger, Special Assistant to Jeffrey Sachs **phone:** +1-347-439-2173 **email:** cbulger@ei.columbia.edu **www:** http://world-happiness.org/upcoming-events/high-level-meeting-on-happiness-and-wellbeing-april-2-2012/

Second Meeting of the Plenary on IPBES: The meeting, organized by UNEP with UNESCO, FAO and UNDP, will determine the modalities and institutional arrangements for the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). **dates:** 16-21 April 2012 **location:** Panama City, Panama **contact:** IPBES Secretariat **phone:** +254-20-762-5135 **email:** ipbes.unep@unep.org **www:** http://www.ipbes.net/

UNCTAD XIII: The 13th Session of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD XIII) will be held on the theme, "Development-centered globalization: Towards inclusive and sustainable growth and development." **dates:** 21-26 April 2012 **location:** Doha, Qatar **contact:** UNCTAD Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-1234 **fax:** +41-22- 917-0057 **email:** meetings@unctad.org **www:** http://www. unctad.org

Second Informal Informal on the UNCSD Outcome Document: This is the second of two "informal informal" consultations to negotiate the draft outcome document for Rio+20. **dates:** 23 April-4 May 2012 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UNCSD Secretariat **email:** uncsd2012@un.org **www:** http://www.uncsd2012.org/

Stockholm+40 Partnership Forum for Sustainable Development: In commemoration of the UN Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm in 1972, this event creates a platform for dialogue on sustainable innovations, sustainable production and sustainable lifestyles. Stockholm+40 also represents an early milestone for the Climate and Clean Air Coalition to reduce Short-lived Climate Pollutants: the first meeting of the Partnership will be held on 23-24 April, with both Ministerial and Working Group sessions. A scientific seminar on Short-Lived Climate Pollutants will also be held during these days. **dates:** 23-25 April 2012 **location:** Stockholm, Sweden **contact:** Ministry of Environment, Sweden **phone:** +46-8-405-1000 **fax:** +46-8-241629 **email:** stockholm40@environment.ministry.se **www:** http://www.sweden.gov.se/stockholm+40

101st Session of the International Labour Conference: This session is expected to consider employment and social protection in the new demographic context, sustainable development, decent work and green jobs. **dates:** 30 May - 15 June 2012 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **contact:** ILO **email:** ilo@ilo.org **phone:** +41-22-799-6111 **fax:** +41-22-798-8685 **www:** http://www.ilo.org/ilc/ILCSessions/101stSession/lang--en/index.htm

Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for Sustainable Development: This Forum will provide a space for interdisciplinary scientific discussions, and dialogue between scientists, policy-makers, Major Groups and other stakeholders. Key messages and conclusions from the Forum will be reported to the UNCSD. **dates:** 11-15 June 2012 **location:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazil **contact:** Maureen Brennan **phone:** +33-1-4525 0677 **email:** Maureen.Brennan@icsu.org **www:** http://www.icsu.org/ rio20/science-and-technology-forum

Global Town Hall at Rio+20: The meeting is convened by ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability, during the UNCSD. Discussions will address how local governments can best contribute to global targets for protecting global common goods, how to "green" the urban economy and how to improve global and local governance systems. **dates:** 13-22 June 2012 **location:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazil **contact:** Monika Zimmerman **email:** rio20@iclei.org **phone:** +49-228/976 299-30 **www:** http://local2012.iclei.org/iclei-and-rio-20/rio-20-global-town-hall/

Third PrepCom for UNCSD: This meeting will take place in Brazil prior to the UNCSD. **dates:** 13-15 June 2012 **location:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazil **contact:** UNCSD Secretariat **email:** uncsd2012@un.org **www:** http://www.uncsd2012.org/

Rio+20 Corporate Sustainability Forum: Innovation and Collaboration for the Future We Want: The forum will give business and investors an opportunity to meet with governments,

local authorities, civil society and UN entities in highly focused workshops and thematic sessions linked to the Rio+20 agenda. **dates:** 15-18 June 2012 **location:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazil **contact:** UN Global Compact Office **phone:** +1-212-907-1347 **fax:** +1-212-963-1207 **email:** rio2012@unglobalcompact.org **www:** http://www. unglobalcompact.org/

First GLOBE Summit of Legislators: The summit will be hosted by the Government of Brazil, Mayor of Rio de Janeiro, GLOBE International and GLOBE Brazil on the weekend prior to UNCSD, attended by heads of Senates, Congresses, Parliaments, and Chairs of relevant parliamentary committees, to negotiate a legislators' protocol to be ratified in the respective legislatures of the participating parliaments. **dates:** 15-17 June 2012 **location:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazil **contact:** GLOBE International **phone:** +44-0-20 7222 6960 **email:** info@globeinternational.org **www:** http://www.globeinternational.info/world-summit-of-legislators/

Rio+20 Corporate Sustainability Forum: Innovation and Collaboration for the Future We Want: The forum will give business and investors an opportunity to meet with governments, local authorities, civil society and UN entities in workshops and thematic sessions linked to the Rio+20 agenda, with the objective of bringing greater scale and quality to corporate sustainability practices. **dates:** 15-18 June 2012 **location:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazil **contact:** UN Global Compact **email:** rio2012@unglobalcompact.org **www:** http://www.unglobalcompact.org

Solutions for a Sustainable Planet International Conference: The International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) is working with partners in Brazil and with international networks and alliances, to organize series of simultaneous meetings, presentations and discussions around five key "solutions for a sustainable planet" to generate commitment to act on key issues on the agenda of UNCSD. **dates:** 16-17 June 2012 **location:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazil **contact:** IIED **phone:** +44-20-7388-2117 **fax:** +44-20-7388-2826 **www:** http://www.iied.org/governance/key-issues/strategic-planning/solutions-for-sustainable-planet

Oceans Day at UNCSD: This event is organized by the Global Ocean Forum **dates:** 17-19 June 2012 **location:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazil **contact:** Miriam Balgos **phone:** +1-302-831-8086 **email:** mbalgos@udel.edu **www:** http://www.globaloceans.org/content/rio20

World Congress on Justice, Governance and Law for Environmental Sustainability: This event, organized by UNEP, promotes global consensus among relevant stakeholders engaged in the development of law, Chief Justices and senior judges, Attorneys-General and Public Prosecutors involved in the interpretation and enforcement of law. **dates:** 18-19 June 2012 **location:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazil **contact:** Jacob Duer **phone:** +254-20-7624-489 **fax:** +254-20-7621-234 **email:** Jacob.Duer@unep.org **www:** http://www.unep.org/dec/worldcongress/

Peoples' Summit at UNCSD: The Peoples' Summit is being organized by 150 organizations, entities and social movements from various countries, and is scheduled to take place in parallel to the UNCSD. The objective of the Summit is to request governments to give political power to the Conference. **dates:** 18-23 June 2012 **location:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazil **email:** contact@forums.rio20.net **www:** http://rio20.net/en/events/peoples-summit-for-social-and-environmental-justice/

SD-Learning: This capacity building event provides participants with practical knowledge and training through multiple courses on aspects of sustainable development **dates:** 13-22 June 2012 **location:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazil **contact:** UNCSD Secretariat **email:** uncsd2012@un.org **www:** http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/meetings_sdlearning.html

ICLEI - 2012 World Congress: This triennial congress will address themes including: green urban economy; changing citizens, changing cities; greening events; and food security and how biodiversity protection can be integrated into municipal planning and decision making. **dates:** 14-18 June 2012 **location:** Belo Horizonte, Brazil **contact:** ICLEI World Secretariat **phone:** +49 22897629900 **email:** world.congress@iclei.org **www:** http://worldcongress2012.iclei.org

UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20): The UNCSD will mark the 20th anniversary of the UN Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit), which convened in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992. **dates:** 20-22 June 2012 **location:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazil **contact:** UNCSD Secretariat **email:** uncsd2012@un.org **www:** http://www.uncsd2012.org/

Fourth Session of the INC to Prepare a Global Legally Binding Instrument on Mercury: This meeting is scheduled to be the fourth of five INC meetings to negotiate a legally binding instrument on mercury. **dates:** 27 June - 2 July 2012 **location:** Punta del Este, Uruguay **phone:** +41-22-917-8192 **fax:** +41-22-797-3460 **email:** mercury.chemicals@unep.org **www:** http://www.unep.org/hazardoussubstances/Mercury/Negotiations/tabid/3320/Default.aspx

Ramsar COP 11: The 11th Conference of Parties (COP 11) to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat will be based on the theme "Wetlands, Tourism and Recreation." **dates:** 6-13 July 2012 **location:** Bucharest, Romania **contact:** Ramsar Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-999-0170 **fax:** +41-22-999-0169 **email:** ramsar@ramsar.org **www:** http://www.ramsar.org/

4th East Asian Seas Congress 2012: The congress is organized on the theme "Building a Blue Economy: Strategy, Opportunities and Partnerships in the Seas of East Asia," and will address opportunities and partnerships for a "blue economy" and the progress and achievements in governance of regional/sub-regional seas within the framework of the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia**. dates**: 9-13 July 2012 **location:** Changwon, Republic of Korea **contact:** EAS Congress Secretariat **phone:** +63 (2) 929-2992 **fax:** +63 (2) 926-9712 **email:** congress@pemsea.org **www:** http://eascongress.pemsea.org/

IUCN World Conservation Congress 2012: The Congress, on the theme of "Nature+", will explore environmental and development challenges, including nature+climate, nature+livelihoods, nature+energy and nature+economics. **dates:** 6-15 September 2012 **location:** Jeju, Republic of Korea

contact: IUCN Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-999-0336 **fax:** +41-22-999-0002 **email:** congress@iucn.org **www:** http://www.iucnworldconservationcongress.org/

Third Session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM3): This meeting is expected to consider adding nanotechnology and hazardous substances within the lifecycle of electrical and electronic products to the SAICM Global Plan of Action (GPA); adding endocrine disruptors and persistent pharmaceutical pollutants to the emerging issues; and the future of financing SAICM implementation after the expiration of the Quick Start Programme (QSP). **dates:** 17-21 September 2012 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **contact:** SAICM Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-8532 **email:** saicm@chemicals.unep.org **www:** http://www.saicm.org

Biosafety Protocol COP/MOP 6: This Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety is organized by the CBD Secretariat. **dates:** 1-5 October 2012 **location:** Hyderabad, India **contact:** CBD Secretariat **phone:** +1-514-288-2220 **fax:** +1-514-288-6588 **email:** secretariat@cbd.int **www:** http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=MOP-06

CBD COP 11: The 11th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) will include a high-level segment from 17-19 October 2012. **dates:** 8-19 October 2012 **location:** Hyderabad, India **contact:** CBD Secretariat **phone:** +1-514-288-2220 **fax:** +1-514-288-6588 **email:** secretariat@cbd.int **www:** http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=COP-11

UNFCCC COP 18: The 18th Conference of the Parties (COP 18) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (COP/MOP 8) is organized by the UNFCCC Secretariat. **dates:** 26 November-7 December 2012 **location:** Doha, Qatar **contact:** UNFCCC Secretariat **phone:** +49-228-815-1000 **fax:** +49-228-815-1999 **email:** secretariat@unfccc.int **www:** http://www.unfccc.int

UNU Conference on Earth System Governance: The conference is jointly hosted by the UN University Institute of Advanced Studies (UNU-IAS), the International Environmental Governance Architecture Research Group and the Tokyo Institute of Technology, focusing on several thematic areas, including architecture of Earth system governance in the 21st century, climate governance architecture, and nuclear safety and post-disaster governance. **dates:** 28-31 January 2013 **location:** Tokyo, Japan **contact:** Norichika Kanie **phone:** +81-45-221-2300 **fax:** +81-45-221-2302 **email:** unias@ias.unu.edu **www:** http://www.ias.unu.edu/sub_page.aspx?catID=35&ddlID=1929

27th Session of UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum: The next session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC 27/GMEF) will review important and emerging policy issues in the field of the environment. **dates:** 18-22 February 2013 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **contact:** Secretary, UNEP Governing Council **phone:** +254-20-762-3431 **fax:** +254-20- 762-3929 **email:** jamil.ahmad@unep.org **www:** http://www.unep.org/

GLOSSARY

10YFP	10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production
AU	African Union
COW	Committee of the Whole
CPR	Committee of Permanent Representatives
CSD	Commission on Sustainable Development
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
EMG	Environment Management Group
GC	Governing Council
GCSS	Governing Council Special Session
GDP	Gross domestic product
GEO	Global Environment Outlook
GMEF	Global Ministerial Environment Forum
ICCM	International Conference on Chemicals Management
IEG	International environmental governance
IFSD	Institutional framework for sustainable development
IPBES	Intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services
MEAs	Multilateral environmental agreements
Rio+20	United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (or UNCSD)
SAICM	Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management
SCP	Sustainable consumption and production
UNCSD	United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (or Rio+20)
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNON	United Nations Office at Nairobi