



SUMMARY OF THE UNECE REGIONAL MINISTERIAL MEETING FOR THE WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: 24-25 SEPTEMBER 2001

The UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Regional Ministerial Meeting for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) took place from 24-25 September 2001, in Geneva, Switzerland. More than 500 participants attended the session, including ministers, representatives of governments, intergovernmental organizations, NGOs and other major groups and stakeholders. They represented the diverse range of countries within the UNECE region, including the European Union, Switzerland, the Transition Countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia, the US, Canada, Turkey and Israel. Observers from South Africa were also in attendance.

The meeting aimed to outline key regional policy issues, priorities and follow-up actions for the WSSD, to provide substantial inputs to its preparatory process, and to forward regional views on international cooperation for sustainable development at the regional and global levels. Participants debated and adopted the Ministerial Statement to the WSSD, and considered follow-up to the UNECE/World Health Organization High-level Meeting on Transport, Environment and Health, held in Geneva on 4 May 2001. Two Ministerial Panels were held, focusing on governance and sustainable development and on poverty and sustainable development.

The results from this regional preparatory meeting will be fed into the second preparatory session for the WSSD, scheduled for 28 January to 8 February 2002, in New York. The WSSD will take place in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 2-11 September 2002.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The World Summit on Sustainable Development will be held 10 years after the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). UNCED, also known as the Earth Summit, took place from 3-14 June 1992, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Over 100 Heads of State and Government, representatives from 178 countries, and over 17,000

participants attended the Conference. The principal outputs of the Rio Summit were the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Statement of Forest Principles, and Agenda 21, a 40-chapter programme of action for sustainable development.

Among other things, Agenda 21 called for the creation of a Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) to: ensure effective follow-up of UNCED; enhance international cooperation and rationalize intergovernmental decision-making capacity; and examine progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 at the local, national, regional and international levels. In 1992, the 47th session of the UN General Assembly set out, in resolution 47/191, the terms of reference for the Commission, its composition, guidelines for the participation of NGOs, the organization of work, its relationship with other UN bodies and Secretariat arrangements. The CSD held its first meeting in June 1993 and has since met annually.

UNGASS-19: Also at its 47th session in 1992, the General Assembly adopted resolution 47/190, which called for a special session of the General Assembly to review and appraise Agenda 21 implementation five years after UNCED. The 19th Special Session of

IN THIS ISSUE

A Brief History of the WSSD	1
Report of the Meeting	2
Consideration of the Ministerial Statement to the WSSD	3
Follow-up to the High-Level Meeting on Transport Environment and Health	5
Panel I: Governance and Sustainable Development.	5
Panel II: Poverty and Sustainable Development	6
Ministerial Statement.	8
Closing Plenary	9
A Brief Analysis of the Meeting	9
Things to Look For Before the WSSD	11

This issue of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* © <enb@iisd.org> is written and edited by Malena Sell <malena@iisd.org> and Jason Switzer <jswitzer@iisd.org>. The Digital Editor is David Fernau <david@iisd.org>. The Operations Manager is Marcela Rojo <marcela@iisd.org> and the On-Line Assistant is Diego Noguera <diego@iisd.org>. The Editors are Pamela S. Chasek, Ph.D. <pam@iisd.org> and Jonathon Hanks <jon@iisd.org> and the Director of IISD Reporting Services is Langston James "Kimo" Goree VI <kimo@iisd.org>. The Sustaining Donors of the *Bulletin* are the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Government of Canada (through CIDA), the United States (through USAID), the Swiss Agency for Environment, Forests and Landscape (SAEFL), the United Kingdom (through the Department for International Development -DfID, and the Foreign & Commonwealth Office), the European Commission (DG-ENV), the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Government of Germany (through the German Federal Ministry of Environment - BMU, and the German Federal Ministry of Development Cooperation - BMZ). General Support for the *Bulletin* during 2001 is provided by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Environment of Finland, the Government of Australia, the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of New Zealand, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Environment of Norway, Swan International, and the Japan Environment Agency (through the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies - IGES). Specific funding for coverage of the WSSD Regional Preparatory meetings has been provided by the UN Division for Sustainable Development (DESA), the Government of Canada (DFAIT), the Government of Germany (through GTZ), the Japanese Ministry of Environment (through IGES) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The *Bulletin* can be contacted by e-mail at <enb@iisd.org> and at tel: +1-212-644-0204; fax: +1-212-644-0206. IISD can be contacted by e-mail at <info@iisd.ca> and at 161 Portage Avenue East, 6th Floor, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 0Y4, Canada. The opinions expressed in the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of IISD and other funders. Excerpts from the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* may be used in non-commercial publications only and only with appropriate academic citation. For permission to use this material in commercial publications, contact the Director of IISD Reporting Services. Electronic versions of the *Bulletin* are sent to e-mail distribution lists and can be found on the Linkages WWW server at <http://www.iisd.ca>. The satellite image was taken above Bonn ©2001 The Living Earth, Inc. <http://livingearth.com>. For information on the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* or to arrange coverage of a meeting, conference or workshop, send e-mail to the Director, IISD Reporting Services at <kimo@iisd.org>.



the UN General Assembly for the Overall Review and Appraisal of Agenda 21, which was held at UN Headquarters in New York from 23-27 June 1997, adopted a "Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21." The document assessed progress made since UNCED, examined implementation in areas requiring urgent action and means of implementation, and established the CSD's work programme for the period 1998-2002.

RESOLUTION 55/199: In December 2000, the General Assembly adopted resolution 55/199, in which it decided to organize the ten-year review of UNCED in 2002 at the summit level to reinvigorate the global commitment to sustainable development. The General Assembly accepted South Africa's offer to host the event. The resolution decided that the review should focus on accomplishments and areas requiring further efforts to implement Agenda 21 and other UNCED outcomes, leading to action-oriented decisions. It should also result in renewed political commitment and support for sustainable development. The decision welcomed the work undertaken at the regional level to provide substantive inputs to the preparatory process and the Summit itself.

PREPCOM I: CSD-10, acting as the Preparatory Committee for the WSSD, took place at UN Headquarters in New York from 30 April to 2 May 2001. The session prepared and adopted decisions on: progress in the preparatory activities at the local, national, regional and international levels, as well as by major groups; specific modalities of future sessions of the preparatory committee; the tentative organization of work during the Summit; provisional rules of procedure of the Summit; and arrangements for accreditation and participation of major groups in the preparatory process and in the Summit.

NATIONAL, SUBREGIONAL AND REGIONAL PREPARATORY PROCESSES: National Preparatory Committees for the WSSD have been established to undertake country-level reviews and assessments, and to raise awareness, and mobilize stakeholders at the national and local levels. Taking information from these processes into account, subregional preparatory meetings for the Johannesburg Summit have been arranged since June 2001, and will continue until October. Eminent Persons' Roundtables on the WSSD have been held in all five UN regions, and Regional Preparatory meetings will be held between September and November 2001. The UNECE Ministerial Meeting is the first of the regional preparatory meetings.

EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA ROUNDTABLE: An Eminent Persons' Roundtable in preparation of the WSSD took place from 6-8 June 2001, in Vail, Colorado. Participants called for a new model of development, acknowledging that the region uses an unfair share of the world's resources at a rate beyond the Earth's carrying capacity. They recognized that current knowledge and technological ability can correct the current course of development, but noted that political will and commitment for action are lacking. Participants stressed the need to educate children and deepen their understanding of natural processes, interdependence on the natural world and their capacity for positive action.

REGIONAL CONSULTATIVE MEETINGS: Regional consultative meetings in preparation for the UNECE Ministerial Meeting were held from 12-13 July and 21-23 September 2001. These meetings considered and prepared the draft Ministerial Statement. An open-ended meeting of the drafting group was also held on 3-4 September.

REPORT OF THE MEETING

On Monday, 24 September, Amb. Harald Kreid, Permanent Representative of Austria to the UN Office at Geneva (UNOG) and Chair of the UNECE, called the meeting to order. The meeting observed a minute of silence to express solidarity with the American people following the recent terrorist attacks in the US. Chair Kreid noted that the meeting was a Special Session of the UN Economic Commission for Europe, and stressed the importance of regional preparations for the WSSD, facilitated by the UN regional economic commissions and regional UNEP offices. He expressed his hope that regional views and proposals would come to play a decisive role in formulating the agenda and identifying issues for the WSSD. Commenting on the ten years since Rio, he pointed both to successes, including EU enlargement, as well as to the challenges, such as global action on climate protection, in achieving sustainable development, and highlighted globalization as an opportunity.

Delegates then adopted the agenda, and elected by acclamation Joseph Deiss, Swiss Minister of Foreign Affairs as Chair. Serhii Kurykin (Ukraine), Ioan Jelev (Romania), Richard Ballhorn (Canada) and Kjell Larsson (Sweden), were elected as Vice-Chairs of the meeting.

Chair Deiss welcomed the participants to Geneva, and highlighted Swiss efforts to integrate sustainable development into national policies and international cooperation. Noting the recent terrorist attacks, he stressed his country's sympathy and solidarity with the US. He cautioned that retaliation and force alone cannot address the roots of terrorism, and supported a strategy of promoting sustainable development, justice and equality between people. He said such an approach would deal with poverty, exclusion and desperation, and suggested that preparations for Johannesburg should proceed in this spirit. He supported a message promoting global equality, and said disparities within and among countries in the UNECE region need to be dealt with. He asked participants to look to the future, inviting them to find consensus and to produce a meaningful contribution from the region to the global preparatory process.

Danuta Hübner, Executive Secretary of UNECE and UN Under-Secretary-General, highlighted achievements and failures with regard to sustainable development in the region, based on the Assessment of Progress in Sustainable Development since Rio 1992 for Member States of UNECE, a report prepared by UNECE and the UNEP Regional Office for Europe. She said the greatest changes have taken place in the countries with economies in transition (EITs), where there are increased levels of poverty and wide distribution in income, but where there is also the emergence of a new foundation for economic growth and the development of civil society. On the situation today, she presented a mixed picture. She highlighted the integration of environmental concerns in decision-making in all sectors of society, urged decoupling economic growth from resource use, and called for more local Agenda 21 action and more input from NGOs. She highlighted the UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (the Aarhus Convention) as a legal breakthrough with regard to public involvement, and called for its effective implementation, as it enters into force on 30 October 2001. She introduced the draft Ministerial Statement, and said regional preparations should build on ongoing processes such as the Ministerial "Environment for Europe," with the next meeting taking place in Kiev, Ukraine, in 2003. She noted regional cooperation on transport, environment and health, forests and



sustainable energy, as well as regional conventions and protocols, and called for new political impetus for sustainable development.

Klaus Töpfer, Executive Director of UNEP, urged that the WSSD contribute to tackling the underlying causes of terrorism. He stressed that the goal of the Summit is to promote cooperation around the world to overcome poverty in a responsible way. He highlighted the growing integration of efforts, noting the shift from Stockholm's focus on environment, to Rio's focus on environment and development, to Johannesburg's focus on sustainable development. He also highlighted the increased integration of civil society and business viewpoints. Stressing that eradicating poverty, meeting social needs and decoupling economic growth are key to resolving environmental problems, he urged reversing the decline in development assistance. He suggested that if the Summit is to be successful then it should lead to a new "global deal" that meets the needs of developing countries. He called for: acknowledgement of common and differentiated responsibilities; support for good governance; the development and transfer of clean technologies; opening of markets to products from the South; responsible use of science; enhancement of compliance and enforcement regimes; and expanded access to information.

Sir Crispin Tickell, Chair of the Regional Roundtable on Sustainable Development for Europe and North America held in Vail in June, and representing the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), reported the results of this expert group meeting. He noted that 30 "hardened industrialists and greenies" reached consensus on the fact that the present generation may be the last that can correct the course of development to respect the environment, and that industrial countries must take responsibility for addressing and helping other countries to address environmental, economic and social problems. He drew attention to the Report of the G8 Renewable Energy Taskforce and the Amsterdam Declaration from over 1000 Global Change scientists. He noted their proposals including tax reform, subsidies removal, new accounting rules, sustainable consumption and wider adoption of the precautionary principle, as well as measures to deal with fresh-water, oceans and seas, and land resources. He urged the ratification of the major multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), and raised the possible need for an international renewable energy agency and for other institutions to support sustainable development.

CONSIDERATION OF THE MINISTERIAL STATEMENT TO THE WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Chair Deiss introduced Agenda Item Four, consideration of the draft Ministerial Statement to the WSSD. Francesco la Camera, Chair of the Drafting Group, noted that the draft statement is the result of a broad process involving participants from the entire UNECE region, as well as representatives of civil society. He stressed poverty eradication and sustainable consumption and production patterns as the two overarching objectives of the statement. Chair Deiss convened a drafting group, which met in parallel with the main Plenary, to resolve remaining brackets in the text.

COUNTRY STATEMENTS: European Union: Belgium, on behalf of the EU, stressed the need for a high level of ambition for the WSSD leading to agreement on a forward-looking, action-oriented agenda accelerating implementation of the Rio commitments. He called for the reaffirmation of the Millennium Declaration and development targets, and stressed the overarching goals of sustainable production and consumption and poverty eradication for WSSD. He stressed the need to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation, and called on all nations to ratify the Kyoto Protocol, allowing its entry into force by 2002. He noted both the opportunities

and risks related to globalization, and drew attention to the international environmental governance process. He called for a "global deal" at Johannesburg, and welcomed dialogue between the UNECE and other regional preparatory processes.

Germany stressed the link between poverty and environment, and supported sustainable energy development in this context. He favored a strong statement on renewable energy, and also stressed water as a key issue, noting that Germany will host a conference on fresh water prior to the WSSD. He said that globalization of the economy should be balanced by global environmental and social targets.

Finland noted that the EU is seeking a broad agenda for the upcoming Trade Ministerial meeting in Doha that incorporates sustainable development concerns. He proposed that countries commit to reversing the loss of environmental resources by 2015, understanding the potential contributions of information technologies, and addressing the neglected needs of Arctic, mountainous and coastal regions.

Sweden highlighted the message of the Borgholm Youth Meeting on Environment and Sustainable Development calling for decisive action at Johannesburg. He stressed the importance of the precautionary principle, and said the international trading system should actively pave the way for sustainable development. He called for such an outcome at Doha.

Austria supported the precautionary principle and drew attention to mountainous ecosystems as a priority. On sustainable energy, he supported efficiency and inclusion of renewable energy, but opposed the inclusion of nuclear.

Portugal noted that international environmental cooperation reinforces the links between peoples and contributes to peace. He urged the WSSD to focus on a few key issues, and proposed beginning with water supply and waste water treatment.

The Netherlands urged that the WSSD rethink sustainable development to include human security and to enshrine common religious and social values at the international level. He urged that "we not let globalization run on its own," and concluded by calling for a new "global deal" – that is forward looking and people oriented, and that addresses trade and aid, and reduces insecurity of water, food, shelter and poverty.

Spain drew attention to progress made in achieving sustainable development, and called for cohesion within different sectors in countries to drive changes in attitudes. She noted the need for transparency, democracy and public involvement.

Italy stressed peace, justice and stability as integrated aspects of sustainable development. He said the UNECE region can aid other regions to achieve poverty eradication through debt relief, increased market access, promotion of foreign direct investment and more official development assistance (ODA) focused on social spending in developing countries. He highlighted the Aarhus Convention as a useful global model emanating from the UNECE region.

Calling this event a unique chance for Europe to speak to the world in advance of Johannesburg, Denmark outlined the elements of a "global deal" beneficial to both North and South. Key elements within a possible deal could include: strengthening trade and market access, integrating standards for environment and labor, committing to poverty reduction, and revitalizing development cooperation and technology transfer to meet international environmental goals.

The UK recommended: establishing targets and systematically monitoring progress; achieving consensus on how to exercise precau-



tion; decoupling economic growth from natural resource consumption; and transferring resources to developing countries. He stressed that a "global deal" should include not only governments, but also business and civil society. He called for financial commitments from OECD governments to support South Africa in hosting the Summit.

Greece supported ratification of agreed-upon MEAs, called for initiatives to restructure international environmental governance; and supported the creation of networks for dissemination of environmental information.

Central and Eastern European Countries: Hungary stressed that as the UNECE regional meeting came first, other regions would pay attention to its outcomes. He stressed the responsibility of the UNECE region to achieve sustainability and to aid developing countries. He called for improvement of integrated decision-making at all levels.

Romania urged that the WSSD put the principles for global governance derived through the 1990s into action. He stressed that this Ministerial Statement should become an insurance policy for the well-being of future generations.

Poland noted national efforts to implement sustainable development policies and stressed, *inter alia*, the need to enhance complementarities between MEAs and between MEAs and economic and social regulations.

The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia said the Ministerial Statement should accommodate the various situations of countries in UNECE region, and stressed problems faced by countries with transition economies or affected by interior conflict.

Latvia stated that in spite of its progress in increased energy efficiency and resource use, socioeconomic pressures on the environment have increased. He hypothesized that accession into the European Union will have a positive impact. He urged that the Johannesburg Summit provide guidelines: on the integration of science into policy; the application of the precautionary principle; the use and transfer of new technologies; capacity building for research; and on measuring progress towards sustainable development.

Croatia urged reflection on the particular needs of countries in transition, on making globalization work for all, and on harnessing science and technology. He attached priority to national sustainable development strategies, to the fund for environment and for energy efficiency under the Stability Pact, and to flexibility in addressing climate change.

Newly Independent States: Ukraine called the principle of sustainable development a key element of modern culture, noting that the principle has often not received enough political support in the newly independent States (NIS). He urged for reference to debt-for-environment-swaps and the polluter pays principle in the draft Ministerial Statement.

Georgia underscored the need to protect the stability of the Caucasus mountains and their biodiversity, and said the NIS should participate fully at Johannesburg.

Kyrgyzstan drew attention to the recommendations of the Central Asian Commission on Sustainable Development, which included addressing national and multilateral water issues, facilitating technology transfer, involving business and the public, establishing protected areas, and utilizing science.

Others: Canada noted the range of views in the UNECE region. He highlighted Canadian sustainable development priorities, including: international environmental governance; health and the

environment; conservation and stewardship; partnership; and sustainable communities. He said Johannesburg should include civil society and major groups as active participants, and called for support for Southern civil society involvement.

Turkey highlighted the need for poverty eradication, noting that disparities between and within nations have increased in the wake of globalization, and said sustainable development is required to maintain peace and security.

Norway underscored that peace and sustainable development are mutually supportive, and highlighted the Environment for Europe process as important for the implementation of the Rio commitments. He noted that sustainable development includes addressing the issue of poverty, and stressed links to the Financing for Development process.

Monaco stressed the importance of subregional cooperation, highlighting the Mediterranean region in which he said managing tourism and water is important.

Israel highlighted national efforts with regard to setting priorities and addressing sustainable development and environmental issues, and said consultation to generate dialogue is important.

Switzerland noted the need for a new impetus to emerge from Johannesburg. He called for concrete action on a limited number of tasks, including decoupling economic growth from resource use, mobilizing financial resources, and integrating environmental and labor rights in trade and domestic policies. He urged attention to the particular needs of transition and Central Asian countries. He concluded by outlining Swiss priorities: sustainable mountain development; freshwater; global environmental issues; social development and poverty alleviation; international trade; and governance at the global and national levels.

Calling on the UNECE to play a leading role in the WSSD, the Russian Federation stressed the importance of harmonizing and enhancing compliance with laws and changing the structure of consumption and production through a balanced approach that accounts for the different interests and priorities for each country.

BUSINESS, INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND NGOS: A representative of the Sami Council highlighted the situation of indigenous peoples living in the Arctic region, stressing chemical pollution originating in other regions as well as climate change as threats. She said the Arctic region would be on the Johannesburg agenda, and called for: inclusion of the Arctic region in the Ministerial Statement; recognition of indigenous peoples and their right to their lands in the Arctic; and timetables for the ratification and implementation of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants and the UNECE chemicals protocols.

On behalf of over 80 NGOs and others in the Northern Alliance for Sustainability (ANPED), Consumers International stressed that the draft Ministerial Statement has been softened, in particular regarding the need for leadership from the North (Principle 7 of the Rio Declaration). He called upon the ministers to reinstall some of the visionary thoughts, and offered the NGO statement prepared by ANPED to the most courageous among them.

The International Council of Local Environmental Initiatives urged national delegations to include representatives from local government, as 80% of the European population is urban. He proposed that some official development assistance (ODA) be earmarked for local government sustainability efforts, including relating to the Kyoto agreement.



The UK Women's National Committee called for gender balance in WSSD preparations and a place for women at the decision-making table.

The European Commission noted EU enlargement as a contribution of the EU to sustainable development, as it involves the transfer of technology and resources to the EITs. He stressed the need for the EU to "put its own house in order" prior to the WSSD, and said globalization must be made sustainable.

The European Environment Agency stressed the need to reinforce and streamline monitoring and reporting in order to implement the principles agreed at Rio.

A representative of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions underscored the importance of the participation of workers and called attention to the social dimensions of sustainable development.

A representative of Business Action for Sustainable Development underscored that much of the achievements of business with regard to sustainable development and reporting have taken place on a sectoral basis, and in cooperation between business and other stakeholders. Regarding requests for financial assistance from the business community to the Johannesburg Summit, he cautioned that businesses may be seen as seeking to exert undue influence on the process, and urged governments to financially support South Africa.

A representative of the Holy See supported a broad and inclusive understanding of sustainable development, recognizing human beings at the center, and hoped to evoke a sense of responsibility in all stakeholders.

A representative of UNED/UK introduced his group, which is an international multi-stakeholder forum. He said the Ministerial Statement lacks a sense of urgency and has been watered down. He called for the new "global deal" idea to be strengthened, and suggested, *inter alia*, that the Earth Charter be put more actively into use in decision-making. He said the WSSD should consolidate stakeholder engagement and turn words into action.

The Centre for International Sustainable Development Law stressed the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development within MEAs, and invited participants to an upcoming meeting on International Sustainable Development Law in May 2002 at the Centre in Montreal.

Two European Youth representatives reported the results of the Borgholm Youth Conference on Environment and Sustainable Development, and pointed to the legitimacy of concerns raised by tens of thousands of largely peaceful protesters in Gothenborg, Genoa and Seattle. They urged: implementing a global convention to enhance accountability of transnational corporations; increasing to 10% the share of renewable energy in power generation; promoting public transport; eliminating perverse subsidies; educating youths and adults; strengthening multilateral environmental agreements and the liability system; utilizing the "ecological footprint"; and meeting international aid targets.

Calling the WSSD a time for action, UNDP identified as its primary focus the implementation of development through its offices in 130 countries, and through capacity building.

Friends of the Earth International (FOE-I) drew attention to the shortfalls identified by the UNECE assessment of sustainable development in Europe. Turning to the Draft Ministerial Statement, he noted that precaution and aid commitments are being left out. He identified the following priorities for FOE-I heading to Johannesburg: a review of trade agreements to ensure that social and environmental needs are

met; regulation to make corporations more accountable; recognition of ecological debt and a commitment to reduced resource consumption in the North; enhanced environmental governance; and launching negotiations on environmental human rights.

According to the World Health Organization, achieving sustainable development in the UNECE region requires addressing the inter-linked problems of health and poverty. She called poverty the largest determinant of ill health, as it generates increased personal and environmental risk and decreases productivity. She urged priority to water issues.

The UN International Strategy for Natural Disaster Reduction pointed to the rising impacts of natural hazards on societies, predicting growing impacts should estimations of climate change prove true, and urged that disaster risk reduction be incorporated as a distinct element for consideration on the agenda of the Johannesburg Summit.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE HIGH LEVEL MEETING ON TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Introducing the session on follow-up to the UNECE/WHO High Level Meeting on Transport, Environment and Health, Danuta Hübner, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Europe, reported that in spite of efforts in Europe, the environmental and health impacts of transport continue to grow. She stated that toxic pollutants, greenhouse emissions, noise, waste and fragmentation of land are creating a rising economic burden. She said that in 1997, the UNECE initiated a process to address transport-related environmental problems at a pan-European level, adding health in 1999 when the London Charter on Transport, Environment and Health was adopted. The Charter seeks to create a framework for measures to integrate health into transport policies, internalize costs and promote alternative transport. In May 2001, the process culminated in a High-Level Meeting recommending that negotiations begin at the regional level on an international legal agreement or framework convention to address the links between transport, environment and health. Danuta Hübner noted that the process would resume in the summer of 2002, calling it one of the most concrete efforts underway in the region in support of Agenda 21.

The Netherlands called upon ministers of transport and environment to be in attendance at the summer meeting in order to decide whether to launch negotiations on a framework convention. He also suggested drawing upon an informal EU meeting on this subject. He urged rapid action in order to forward it to the Fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment for Europe, to be held in Kiev in May 2003.

PANEL I: GOVERNANCE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Ministerial Panel on Governance and Sustainable Development was held on Tuesday morning, 25 September. Chaired by Svend Auken, Danish Minister of Environment and Energy, it focused on: integration of social, economic and environmental issues at the decision-making level; public participation in decision-making; transparency of policies and decision-making; partnerships in governance for sustainable development; local authorities, partnerships and sustainable communities; the role of science in informing decision-making; regional governance including the Environment for Europe process and regional agreements; and global governance.

Chair Auken called good governance a key sustainable development topic. He stressed the integration of environmental considerations in other spheres, participation in the decision-making process and the need to base decisions on sound science. He recalled the Malmö Ministerial Declaration and ongoing efforts to strengthen the



international environmental governance architecture. He also stressed the immediate need for adequate and predictable funding for UNEP. He highlighted efforts in the UNECE region, including the Aarhus Convention, which he said can serve as inspiration for other regions in the run-up to Johannesburg, and supported further cooperation with the private sector.

PANEL PRESENTATIONS: Olivier Deleuze, Belgian State Secretary of Energy and Sustainable Development, underscored sustainable development as a horizontal issue, meaning that it needs to be integrated into all sectors. He highlighted the Belgian Federal Council for Sustainable Development, which proposes sustainable development initiatives for all sectoral departments, and he proposed a similar initiative at the international level. He stressed partnership between the public and private sectors, noting that civil society should be involved in promoting sustainable development. He underscored that unsustainability of current lifestyles is a cultural problem and that this can only be changed through cooperation with civil society and governments.

Victoria Elias, European EcoForum, characterized good governance as a system based on democracy, freedom, trust, efficient and fair institutional arrangements, reliable rights for citizens, transparency, and public participation. She noted that good governance is slowly being developed in the UNECE region and is supported by the Aarhus Convention. She highlighted a study by the European EcoForum on the implementation in the UNECE region of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on public participation, and said that limitations include time-consuming court procedures and prohibitive costs. She also noted the risks related to privatization. She cautioned that cynicism will arise if the public does not perceive that their comments are being taken seriously.

Yves Cochet, French Minister of Environment, noted the lack of progress since Rio and highlighted Johannesburg as an opportunity to start over. He noted as priorities: the protection of natural resources, with an emphasis on eco-efficiency; linking environmental protection and poverty eradication, including through the development of renewable energy resources; globalization of sustainable development; and questions of governance. On international environmental governance he noted current difficulties and called for a progressive strengthening of structures including a World Environment Organization, hoping it could be agreed on at Johannesburg. He stressed the importance of a "global deal" and said mentalities and culture have to change.

Paula Dobriansky, US Under-Secretary-of State for Global Affairs, assured participants that the recent tragic events in her country will not deter it from acting globally. She said the WSSD must provide positive forward-looking initiatives, and stressed six priority areas related to good governance, which contribute to economic growth, higher living standards and social equality: capacity building; institution building; public access to environmental and other information in support of sustainable development; informed and science-based decision-making; public participation, coordination and partnerships; and access to justice in environmental matters and enforcement of environmental laws and regulations.

Mark Moody-Stuart, Business Action for Sustainable Development, noted that the International Chamber of Commerce and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development have set up Business Action for Sustainable Development as an initiative to forward the business contribution to WSSD. With regard to businesses' improvement of their own sustainability, he said that this happens through consultations and openness, providing examples such

as the Marine Stewardship Council and sustainable forestry. He stressed that the initiatives are on a sectoral basis, as critical issues differ between industries, and that this should be considered at Johannesburg. He stressed the role of informed consumers in rewarding sustainable businesses, and supported a regulatory framework, rather than detailed regulations.

Ilona Boda, Political Secretary of State at the Hungarian Ministry for Environment, noted the balancing of the three pillars of sustainable development as a challenge for governments. She called for strategic thinking and planning to harmonize long and short term interests. She suggested setting targets and developing indicators to monitor progress, and to involve stakeholders in the process. She supported strategic environmental assessments, economic instruments based on the polluter pays principle, and the use of voluntary agreements.

Nurlan Iskakov, Vice-Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection in Kazakhstan, noted important effects of the Rio Summit, such as the establishment of a civil society in countries previously lacking it. He highlighted positive aspects of elaborating sustainable development strategies in Kazakhstan, and noted the rise of a free market economy, media, Internet, consumer rights, and environmental projects in cooperation with donors. He said Kazakhstan has opted to be a non-nuclear state, stressing that it will make sure to ward off the threat of international terrorism as one aspect of its sustainable development policy.

Nicolae Stratan, Moldovan Deputy Minister of Ecology, Construction and Territorial Development, stressed the important role of regional cooperation for small countries such as Moldova. He called for government action to achieve sustainable development, especially in the NIS, and for bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

DISCUSSION: In the ensuing discussion, participants stressed the need for and difficulties related to integration, and highlighted different national experiences. One participant pointed out that there is no tradition of integration, and suggested that integration be a key theme at the Kiev Ministerial Meeting of the Environment for Europe process in 2003. Chair Auken highlighted the EU Cardiff process which aims at promoting integration. Other speakers noted the role of public participation to ensure integration.

Paula Dobriansky noted commonalities among the presentations with regard to critical goals that underpin sustainable development, and stressed a system of checks and balances based on the executive, legislative and judicial branches, involving stakeholder participation, as key to ensuring integration. Yves Cochet called for a sustainable development index based on the principle of integration. Canada outlined its process to ensure integration, noting that implementation of sustainable development has allowed sectors to develop a common language.

In response to a question on whether regulations could function as a stimulus to industry, Mark Moody-Stuart noted positive examples such as energy conservation and fleet efficiency standards, where markets operate within a framework of social objectives. He cautioned that such frameworks need careful design.

PANEL II: POVERTY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Ministerial Panel on Poverty and Sustainable Development was held on Tuesday morning, 25 September. Chaired by Jan Pronk, Dutch Minister of Environment and Spatial Planning, it focused on: national policies for social integration; ageing and social security; the impact of poverty on the environment; the impact of migration flows and refugees on sustainable development; employment opportunities



and constraints; security and the impact of war on poverty; national policies for social integration and social security; natural resource use and poverty; and sources of financing.

PANEL PRESENTATIONS: Nino Chkhobadze, Georgian Minister of Environment and Natural Resources Protection, asserted that her country can escape poverty through environmental programmes, in particular through attention to water issues. She noted several programmes that have stimulated economic and social development, and that have simultaneously proven the value of sustainable development for poverty relief. She drew attention to the difficulty of mobilizing financial resources, implementing fiscal discipline and financing environment-sensitive policies.

Serhii Kurykin, Ukrainian Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, noted the situation in countries with economies in transition, and said that poverty leads to the violation of sustainability principles, noting unsustainable resource extraction in EITs and growing gaps between those that over-consume and those without resources. He supported debt-for-environment swaps as a means of dealing both with the debt challenge and the sustainability challenge in the NIS. Kurykin noted that the NIS were created on the ruins of the unsustainable use of natural resources in the Soviet Union. He said sustainable development does not yet constitute a shared value in the NIS.

Michael Meacher, UK Minister of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, stressed that world poverty has to be a central issue at the Johannesburg Summit. He highlighted global poverty facts, noting environmental causes and stressing that a good environment is not a luxury, but is essential to minimum standards of life. He noted deteriorating trends, and stressed that environmental degradation is caused by the over-consumption of the rich, not by the poor who lack the technology and funding to implement better management systems. He further underscored war and armed conflict as a cause of poverty, and stressed that it is more cost effective to prevent conflict and address its causes, by: increasing environmental security; promoting regional framework agreements among countries in affected areas; and implementing the global development targets. He supported the idea of a "global deal" at Johannesburg.

Karine Danielyan, Association for Sustainable Human Development, Armenia, highlighted the socioeconomic situation in her region, which has strongly deteriorated over the last ten years. She noted a tenfold increase in poverty, increased inflation and unemployment, and massive emigration from the Caucasus. She said the scale of human development has deteriorated, and suggested that privatization has led to inequality, corruption and polarization of her country. She stressed the need for immediate action, by, *inter alia*, strengthening rather than further weakening the role of the state, lightening the debt burden, and strengthening the national economy through market access.

Richard Haworth, Acting Deputy Minister, Natural Resources Canada, argued that for many developing and transition countries, natural resource development is vital for creating jobs, attracting investment, and generating funds for social development including medical services, education, and community involvement in decision-making. He noted that in Canada many natural resource-rich sites are located among remote Native communities. Partnerships between mining companies and communities today include life skills training, education, and other social services. In response to Chair Pronk's question regarding the need to impose international conditions on foreign investment for natural resource exploitation, he pointed out that Canada's government has played a facilitating role in establishing

partnerships, and also in ensuring that companies operate by the same standards overseas as in Canada, often in cooperation with the Canadian International Development Agency.

The Chair turned this issue over to the other panelists. Nino Chkhobadze noted that while compliance by foreign investors with the rules of their home states would improve the situation, this is not normally the case. She stressed that her country could not conserve the environment at the expense of economic development.

Tatjana Hema, President of the Albanian National Environmental Agency, argued that for the poor, many of whom are women, there is no sustainable development. She traced the links between affluence, degradation of the environment, and poverty, which she called "a lack of choices." She said those who are poor seek to escape poverty, but lack access to and control of resources, and are economically and socially excluded. She argued that each person has an equal right to use the planet Earth, and that we need greater redistribution of resources. She urged greater investment in defining and tackling links between the environment and poverty.

DISCUSSION: In the ensuing discussion Chair Pronk asserted that to countries of the South, the sustainable development agenda is seemingly only about tackling environmental interests. He asked panelists whether traditional issues of poverty reduction and development will be on the agenda in Johannesburg. In response, Danielyan noted that in Stockholm in 1972, these issues were Southern countries' primary concerns, with environment not being as important to their interests.

Responding to a question on efforts within the UN framework to address the link between environment, development and poverty, Danuta Hübner said that the issue is addressed in a comprehensive format. She said the UNECE deals with sustainable development by channeling it through specific programmes such as on transport, benchmarking and monitoring, and unemployment, and noted the extensive cooperation with other UN agencies, as well as with civil society.

On the issue of a "global deal," Michael Meacher advocated including specific targets to be monitored, and stressed partnership with business and NGOs. Richard Hayworth stressed the role of governments as facilitators rather than leaders. Comments were made from the floor on the importance of the private sector in a global deal. One participant stressed the need for a good governance framework in order for businesses to invest in countries. Another questioned who should cover risks when foreign investors go into countries perceived as high risk countries. Another said businesses are not yet real partners in sustainable development in the NIS, quoting examples of environmentally unsound investment.

On debt relief, one participant said it should be conditional on social and environmental spending. Michael Meacher noted that keeping poor countries in a permanently indebted state is in the interest of no one in an interdependent world. Switzerland urged that countries not let the new tasks on the international agenda – such as terrorism and climate change – deplete funds needed for international development. Commenting on the UN Financing for Development process and the political collapse at Rio+5, he noted that if this process does not succeed in mobilizing new funds, it is likely that this will result in failure in Johannesburg.

In response to the Chair's question regarding alternative sources of finance to provide alternatives to stagnating ODA as part of a "global deal," Danielyan urged attention to both private and public sources.



In response to the Chair's question as to whether NGOs can be as democratic as governments, and not just lobbyists or interest groups, Friends of the Earth International noted that it is a network in which Southern offices can outvote Northern offices. It urged that any "global deal" be struck between governments, as only they can retake control of globalization and make it sustainable. One delegate urged collaboration with NGOs as they bridge between policy makers and academia. Another argued that the public favors greater spending on ODA, yet political will must be mobilized. A third postulated the need for international mechanisms such as global carbon taxes to finance global public goods. One participant stressed the need to recall the UN Secretary-General's Global Compact when planning a new global deal, so as not to create confusing or overlapping initiatives.

Wrapping up, Chair Pronk asserted that the UNECE region has a special responsibility towards countries in transition in helping them to escape the "vicious circle of poverty and unsustainable development." He argued that unless Europe can succeed in these regions, it cannot be an example to the rest of the world. He noted interest in a global partnership, deal or compact, if this is forward-looking and based on partnership. He stressed however that governments should not use partnership as an excuse to shy away from their responsibilities. He urged that special attention be paid to the depletion of natural resources so that the various risks can be weighed responsibly. He concluded that no matter how sustainable development is approached, it requires additional public finance, but suggested that how this is to be raised constitutes a separate question.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

The meeting sought consensus between the gathered ministers on a Statement reviewing the progress made since the Rio Conference in 1992, and outlining the key policy issues, priorities and follow-up, as an input to the preparatory process for the Johannesburg Summit. Negotiations had begun on 12-13 July and continued, in sessions both open and closed to the public, on 3-4 September and from 21 September until the morning of Tuesday, 25 September, when ministers reached consensus on the text.

Contentious issues debated during the drafting of the Statement included:

- the elements of a "global deal" that might be sought from the Summit;
- financing, including ODA;
- the application or promotion of precaution, the precautionary principle or approach;
- the application, promotion or reduction of the "ecological footprint" as a national measure of resource consumption;
- management of risks associated with living modified organisms (LMOs);
- the polluter pays principle and liability for environmental damages;
- the establishment of targets for renewable energy in the domestic energy supply; and
- the definition and recognition of needs of indigenous peoples and their communities.

The final text of the Ministerial Statement has a preamble and three sections: a listing of priority actions on global challenges; a listing of priority actions for the UNECE Region; and a concluding section on review of progress.

PREAMBLE: The preamble: reaffirms that the region has a major role to play in global efforts to achieve sustainable development;

recognizes that different levels of economic development may require different approaches; and references strengthening the implementation of the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21 in contributing to achieving the international development goals. Noting that efforts in the region have focused on poverty eradication and sustainable production and consumption patterns, the preamble elaborates the following priorities of the UNECE region for the Summit: sustainable management and conservation of natural resources; environment and health; making globalization work for sustainable development; improving governance and democratic processes at all levels; education, science and technology; and financing for sustainable development as a cross-cutting issue. It concludes by calling for attendance at the highest political level at the Summit.

PART I – THE SUMMIT: PRIORITY ACTIONS ON

GLOBAL CHALLENGES: This section is broken up into a chapeau, and includes sections on: poverty eradication; sustainable management and conservation of the natural resource base; making globalization work for sustainable development; improving governance and democratic processes at all levels; financing sustainable development; and education, science and technology for decision-making. The chapeau states that countries will seek to launch a concrete mechanism in Johannesburg to carry forward the objectives of sustainable development and notes the wish of the EU and others to seek to achieve a "global deal."

The section on poverty eradication calls this task "central to sustainable development," and urges the Summit to provide a better understanding of the links between environment, poverty, trade and human security, and stresses the need to operationalize development goals and to set up effective monitoring systems, drawing links to the expected strategies and actions to emerge from the UN Conference on Financing for Sustainable Development.

The section on sustainable management and conservation of the natural resource base encourages countries to set goals on environmental protection, recognizes that natural resources are fundamental to the survival of many indigenous and local communities, calls for special attention to the Arctic, stresses the role of international legal instruments including MEAs, and recognizes the need to address forests and chemicals.

The section on making globalization work for sustainable development encourages environmentally and socially responsible investments in particular in Least Developed Countries (LDCs), agrees to enhance the mutually supportive role of MEAs and the international trading system, supports the launch of a new round of trade negotiations with sustainable development as an overarching objective at the next session of the WTO ministerial conference, welcomes the UN Secretary-General's Global Compact Initiative, and recognizes the possibilities offered by new information and communication technologies.

The section on improving governance and democratic processes at all levels notes that good governance forms a part of the necessary foundation for sustainable development, encourages the Summit to initiate new efforts to improve partnerships with civil society and business, calls for the development and implementation of Local Agenda 21 strategies, encourages integration of sustainable development efforts in other forums, and recognizes the need to improve the effectiveness of international environmental institutions, emphasizing the need to provide UNEP with adequate funding and supporting the Global Environmental Governance process.



The section on financing sustainable development recognizes the primary role of domestic resources as well as trade liberalization and private financial flows in generating resources for poverty eradication and sustainable development. It notes that financing for sustainable development should build on deliberations within the UN Conference on Financing for Sustainable Development, encourages exploration of innovative financial resources in cooperation with the private sector, notes the role of ODA and that most UNECE countries agree that the international community should strive to reach the 0.7% of GNP target for ODA.

The section on education, science and technology for decision-making notes that the Summit should address precaution, as set forth in the Rio Declaration, since it underlies a number of multilateral agreements, and agrees to improve education, giving special attention to curricula related to sustainable development.

PART II – THE SUMMIT: PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR THE ECE REGION: This section welcomes the Regional Assessment Report and highlights important issues including: movement towards less resource intensive and polluting industry, including progress in eco-efficiency has resulted in less pollution and waste per unit, however production and consumption and overall pressures have increased; air, water and land pollution, as well as climate change are major environmental problems in the region; and economic and social disparities have increased. The Statement:

- acknowledges the role of regional environmental conventions and processes;
- takes note of the EU enlargement process;
- notes the role of business and industry in ensuring environmentally friendly production methods;
- commits to work towards decoupling of economic growth from environmental degradation and promotion of renewable energy and cleaner production;
- commits to further efforts to integrate environmental and health strategies;
- supports ecological networks in all ecosystems;
- commits to the implementation of relevant global and regional conventions and to support transition economies; and
- promotes the application of the polluter pays principle.

PART III – REVIEW OF PROGRESS: This section notes the need for a regional-level review process, committing countries to a comprehensive review by 2011 and the usefulness of sustainable development indicators in this regard, and welcomes their development.

CLOSING PLENARY

The closing plenary took place Tuesday afternoon, 25 September. Chair Deiss introduced the agenda item on adoption of the draft Ministerial Statement. Richard Ballhorn, Chair of the drafting group, noted that all brackets had been resolved. He noted that the final contentious issues that had been resolved related to the concept of the ecological footprint, a global deal, ODA targets, and the ideas of the precautionary principle and the polluter pays principle. The Ministerial Statement was then adopted by acclamation.

Chair Deiss said a Chair's summary of the meeting would be distributed and submitted to the second WSSD Preparatory Commitment to be held in New York in January. In closing, he noted that the meeting represented the first of the regional preparatory meetings, and that it had succeeded in formulating a message for the WSSD that would inspire other regions. He highlighted the idea of a "global deal," stressing that problems such as persistent poverty, conflict and global

change endanger the long term survival of humanity. He said it should take account of the multiple problems countries face, providing multiple answers. He stressed the responsibility of the UNECE region, as the wealthiest part of the world, in responding to social and environmental challenges. With regard to regional issues, he noted progress in cooperation since Rio, including with regard to dealing with fresh-water, mountains, climate issues and poverty eradication. He said experience and knowledge from the regional level should be made available globally, and expressed his conviction that solidarity is required beyond the regional level for the WSSD to move "from Rio to responsibility."

Danuta Hübner and Klaus Töpfer thanked Switzerland for hosting the meeting, as well as all involved in organizing it. Chair Deiss closed the meeting at 2:20 pm.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE MEETING

AFTERSHOCKS FELT ACROSS THE ATLANTIC

The recent terrorist attacks on the US were on the minds of all delegates at this, the first of the regional PrepComs for the WSSD. Many delegates expressed concern that these attacks would have a negative impact on the WSSD process, particularly in light of the consequent reordering of priorities on the international agenda. This concern has been further compounded by the storm clouds looming on the economic horizon, further complicated by the potential launch of a new round of international trade negotiations in Qatar later this year. Participants at the meeting were conscious of the fact that the world was expecting a strong message of leadership from the UNECE Ministerial Statement that would demonstrate to other regions the commitment of the world's richest countries to a substantive outcome at the WSSD.

Negotiations on the Ministerial Statement continued well into the night preceding the meeting. To some in the NGO community – who had been following the process for many months – the commitments on aid and on precaution in earlier drafts had been watered down to the point of redundancy as negotiators returned to the table on Monday morning.

During the preliminary discussions a number of contentious issues became apparent. These included in particular: the notion of supporting a "global deal" between North and South as an outcome of the WSSD; agreeing on sources of financing; using the "ecological footprint" and other metrics to monitor and promote reduction of consumption levels; applying the precautionary principle in decision making; promoting renewable energy through numerical targets; and managing the risks of Living Modified Organisms. The following sections briefly outline the areas of contention and positions held by key groups.

A GLOBAL DEAL – "WISHPFUL" THINKING

Traditionally seen as the region championing the environmental pillar of sustainable development, UNECE ministers stressed the need for poverty eradication and recognized the problem of over consumption in the North.

The idea of a "global deal" – conceived by South Africa and championed in the UNECE region in particular by Denmark and the EU – was defined in a non-paper circulated by the Danes as a deal to ensure a new balance between global economic, social and environmental development. Key elements of the deal include improving market access for developing countries, increasing development assistance,



providing debt relief and promoting the transfer of sustainable technologies. In addition, developed countries would agree to promote the decoupling of economic growth and environmental degradation to demonstrate their commitment to sustainable development. In recognition of the migration of power from the state to the private sector and civil society since Rio, some delegates called for a tripartite “global deal” between States, the private sector and NGOs. Others urged governments not to abdicate responsibility for achieving the Rio goals.

While the idea of a “global deal” enjoyed considerable support among many of the participants, it was unclear just what it entailed, and thus could not gain support from all States present. The final text “note[s] the wish of the European Union and other countries to seek to achieve a ‘global deal,’” but goes no further. In some ways, this acknowledges that the contours of any new deal between countries should emerge through the preparatory process, including in other regions, rather than be defined at the outset by only one.

FINANCING DEVELOPMENT – GOOD NEWS FOR MONTERREY?

As with most international negotiations relating to environment and development, the issue of financing formed a crucial element of the discussions. Noting that no concrete commitments on reaching ODA targets resulted from this meeting of ministers, some participants felt a stronger signal should have been sent by the UNECE region, which represents the wealthiest of the UN regions.

Eyes turned to the Financing for Development process, which would benefit greatly from a positive signal from the UNECE meeting regarding new sources of funds. If success is not achieved at the Summit in Monterrey, Mexico, in March 2002, there is concern that this will significantly decrease chances of reaching a positive outcome at the WSSD. One delegate predicted “a political collapse” in Johannesburg if new funds could not be mobilized in Monterrey, and noted that while some smaller States had reversed their falling budgets for ODA (notably the United Kingdom and Switzerland), the decline in Japanese aid would mean that, overall, public funds for development would fall.

PRECAUTION – A CAUTIOUS ADVANCE

The US sought to have text on precaution, the precautionary principle or approach dropped from the declaration, indicating that they do not want this issue on the agenda at the WSSD. The EU, by contrast, sought to “emphasize” its use in setting further targets under MEAs. The US ultimately agreed to a useful suggestion by the Swiss delegation to “address” precaution in Johannesburg, thus promising “a robust discussion” at the Summit. Such a discussion seems unlikely to lead to agreement on application at the international level, at least in part due to the fear by the US that acknowledgement of the concept may prejudice the new round of trade liberalization negotiations likely to begin in Qatar this November.

That said, one commentator noted that by accepting precaution as a concept underlying multilateral agreements in general, and not solely environmental instruments, ministers have taken one step closer to acknowledging precaution as a principle of international law.

ONE SMALL STEP FOR THE ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT

Recognizing the particular responsibilities of the UNECE region in efforts to achieve sustainable development, the draft Ministerial Statement proposed “explor[ing] the concept of reducing the ecological footprint” of the region. The “footprint” seeks to measure the impact of

consumption and resource use in one location on other locations, and would in effect illustrate the consequences of UNECE consumption patterns on other regions. The US and EU took different sides on whether it was an internationally-accepted tool, with the US ultimately accepting that an informal political discussion on this matter was warranted.

Reference to the footprint metric was replaced in the final text, in which it was agreed that the region could set goals and targets “to confront negative... impacts of its present development inside *and outside* the region.” It was considered a breakthrough that the ecological footprint concept remained in the text up to the level of the ministers’ negotiations.

REGIONAL DISCORD

Divisions between countries within the UNECE region were apparent at the meeting, particularly between the US and the EU. Many representatives of the EU had wished to use this meeting and the Ministerial Statement as the platform to showcase their commitment to the Summit and to support developing country issues. They felt frustrated at what they perceived as inertia on the part of the US, which wanted to water down the Statement and its implications. Representing a large group at the sidelines, some representatives of the newly independent States (NIS) eloquently expressed their concern with regard to traditional economic and development issues. They noted the wide disparities and separate realities within the region, and the painful process of transition to market economies. However, they were seen as being less effective in influencing the process, which was dominated by the North America/EU rift, with Switzerland and Canada reportedly playing complementary brokering roles.

Although many NGOs from the NIS were present, they had less experience in playing an active role in the negotiations. European NGOs were most clearly involved, with comparatively few North American NGOs in attendance. To some extent, this left the US delegation free from lobbying by civil society. The US team set itself up for a drubbing, taking tough positions against inclusion of precaution and of the ecological footprint concept in the text of the Declaration. It was noted however that the US delegates provided an informal briefing to NGOs during the weekend, which led to useful exchange of information both ways, and to a softening of the US stance on particular statements.

In debating and adopting the UNECE Ministerial Statement, one important phase of preparations for WSSD has been concluded. Positions from countries in this region have been clearly tabled, and the first fights fought. The process allowed for the gathering and interaction of interested parties that are likely to stick it out until the very end. Some noted that subsequent to the regional meetings, negotiating groups are likely to follow traditional lines at the Summit, rather than those imposed through the regional groupings. The general sentiment seemed to be that although in many ways the meeting replicated the all too numerous ones held within the CSD forum, hope remains, centered particularly around the launch of a to-be-determined “global deal.” An interesting factor is the potentially wide influence of the US in the process, due to its membership in not one but three of the UN regional groupings.

Observers will now turn to the meetings in the other regions and their response to the UNECE Ministerial, as well as to the second WSSD PrepCom in New York in early February that will take stock of the regional advances – or lack thereof.



THINGS TO LOOK FOR BEFORE THE WSSD

2002 WSSD SUBREGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETINGS:

Subregional preparatory meetings for the WSSD are taking place between June and October 2001. The Southeast Asia subregional meeting will take place from 17-19 October in Manila, the Philippines. For information, contact: Rezaul Karim, ESCAP, Bangkok; tel: +66-2-288-1614, e-mail: karim.unescap@un.org or Nirmal Andrews, UNEP Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, tel: +66-2-288-1870; fax: +66-2-280-3829; e-mail: andrewsni@un.org. The West Africa meeting will convene from 1-3 October in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. For information, contact: Ousmane Laye, UNECA; tel: +251-1-515-761; e-mail: olaye@uneca.org or Sekou Toure, UNEP Regional Office for Africa; tel: +254-2-624-285; e-mail: sekou.toure@unep.org; Internet: <http://www.johannesburgsummit.org/>

2002 WSSD REGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETINGS: The following regional preparatory meetings for the WSSD are scheduled for 2001. The Africa meeting is scheduled for 15-18 October in Nairobi, Kenya. The Latin American and Caribbean meeting will be held from 23-24 October in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The West Asia meeting will occur on 24-25 October in Cairo, Egypt. The Asia and Pacific meeting will take place in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, from 27-29 November. For more information, contact: Hiroko Morita-Lou, DESA; tel: +1-212-963-8813; fax: +1-212-963-4260; e-mail: moritalou@un.org; Internet: <http://www.johannesburgsummit.org/>

SOUTHERN NGO SUMMIT: This summit will take place from 8-10 October 2001 in Algiers, Algeria, to prepare for the WSSD. For more information, contact: Esmeralda Brown, Southern Caucus Chairperson, New York; tel: +1-212-682-3633; fax: +1-212-682-5354; e-mail: ebrown@gbgm-umc.org

FIRST INTERGOVERNMENTAL MEETING OF EXPERTS TO DEVELOP GUIDELINES ON COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT OF MEAS:

This meeting will be held from 22-26 October 2001, in Nairobi, Kenya. For more information, contact: D. Kaniaru, UNEP DEPI; tel: +254-2-62-3507; fax: +254-2-62-4249; e-mail: donald.kaniaru@unep.org; Internet: <http://www.unep.org>

SECOND WORLD CONFERENCE ON TECHNOLOGY ADVANCES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: This conference is scheduled to take place from 5-8 November 2001, in Cairo, Egypt. This event aims to provide an interactive forum for manufacturers, technology users, interested technologists, policy makers, and other government officials with the objective of evaluating technical and economic feasibilities, policy reform and regulatory issues, financing and market strategies related to management and development of the key resources needed for sustainable development. For more information, contact Dr. Fuad Abulfotuh; tel: +20-3-562 25 78; fax +20-3-561 77 75 or +20-3-562 29 15; e-mail: mceet@aast.edu; Internet: <http://www.aast.edu/mceet/>

CONFERENCE ON EQUITY FOR A SMALL PLANET: This conference will be held from 12-13 November 2001, in London, UK. It will focus on the dynamics and tensions between globalization and local livelihoods, and provide a platform for Southern experiences to inform the agenda for the WSSD. For more information, contact: IIED Conference Organizer; tel: +44-20-7388-2117; e-mail: wssd@iied.org; Internet: <http://www.iied.org/wssd/meetings.html>

2001 ASIA-PACIFIC EARTH CHARTER CONFERENCE:

This conference is scheduled for 29 November - 2 December 2001 in Brisbane, Australia. The conference will seek to promote awareness, acceptance, and adoption of the Earth Charter for the Asia-Pacific

Region. It will also contribute to the region's preparations for the WSSD. For more information, contact: Clem Campbell; tel: +61-7-5429-5401; e-mail: clemcampbell@optusnet.com.au; Internet: http://www.gu.edu.au/centre/kceljag/eljag/04_events/nov2001earthcharter/earth_charter.htm

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON FRESHWATER:

This conference, hosted by the German Federal Environment Ministry and the German Federal Ministry for Development Cooperation, will be held from 3-7 December 2001, in Bonn, Germany. It will serve as preparation for the WSSD, and will review Chapter 18 of Agenda 21 focusing on freshwater issues. For more information, contact: Angelika Wilcke, Conference Secretariat; tel: +49-228-28046-57; e-mail: info@water-2001.de; Internet: <http://www.water-2001.de>

SECOND WSSD PREPARATORY SESSION: This meeting will take place from 28 January - 8 February 2002, at UN Headquarters in New York. It will review the results of national and regional preparatory processes, examine the main policy report of the Secretary-General, and convene a Multi-stakeholder Dialogue. For more information, contact: Andrey Vasilyev, DESA; tel: +1-212-963-5949; fax: +1-212-963-4260; e-mail: vasilyev@un.org; Major groups contact: Zehra Aydin-Sipos, DESA; tel: +1-212-963-8811; fax: +1-212-963-1267; e-mail: aydin@un.org; Internet: <http://www.johannesburgsummit.org/>

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT: The UN International Conference on Financing for Development will be held from 18-22 March 2002, in Monterrey, Mexico. It will bring together high-level representatives from governments, the United Nations, and other leading international trade, finance and development-related organizations. The Preparatory Committee will meet from 15-19 October 2001, in New York. For more information contact: Harris Gleckman, Financing for Development Coordinating Secretariat; tel: +1-212-963-4690; e-mail: gleckman@un.org or Federica Pietracci, tel: +1-212-963-8497; e-mail: pietracci@un.org; Internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/ffd>

THIRD WSSD PREPARATORY SESSION: This meeting will take place at UN Headquarters in New York from 25 March - 5 April 2002. It aims to produce the first draft of a "review" document and elements of the CSD's future work programme. For more information, contact Andrey Vasilyev, DESA (see above).

INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S CONFERENCE ON THE ENVIRONMENT: The fourth UNEP International Children's Conference on the Environment will take place in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada from 22-24 May 2002. The conference is expected to bring together 800 children from 10 to 12 years of age from over 115 countries. The conference will also produce a statement from children to the world leaders who will meet for the WSSD. For more information, contact: Theodore Oben, UNEP; tel: +254-2-623262; e-mail: theodore.oben@unep.org; Internet: http://www.unep.org/children_youth/

FOURTH WSSD PREPARATORY SESSION: This meeting will take place from 27 May - 7 June 2002, in Indonesia. It will include Ministerial and Multi-stakeholder Dialogue Segments, and is expected to result in elements for a concise political document to be submitted to the 2002 Summit. For more information, contact: Andrey Vasilyev, DESA (see above).

WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:

The World Summit on Sustainable Development will take place in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 2-11 September 2002. For more information, contact: Andrey Vasilyev, DESA (see above).