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## SUMMARY OF THE ECLAC REGIONAL PREPARATORY CONFERENCE FOR THE WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: 23-24 OCTOBER 2001

The Latin American and Caribbean Regional Preparatory Conference for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) took place at Rio Centro in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 23-24 October 2001. Representatives of 27 Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) States, three associate members of ECLAC, five non-ECLAC UN member States, and representatives from UN agencies, multilateral financial institutions, and NGOs attended the Conference.

The meeting immediately followed the 13th Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on 22-23 October 2001. Delegates considered progress achieved in implementation of Agenda 21, discussed the document regarding "The sustainability of development in Latin America and the Caribbean: Challenges and opportunities," and heard statements by ministers and representatives of international organizations and civil society. A Special Session, during which Brazilian President Fernando Henrique Cardoso spoke, was held on Tuesday, 23 October, and a high-level Panel on Financing Sustainable Development was convened on the same day.

At the end of the meeting, delegates adopted the "Rio de Janeiro Platform for Action on the Road to Johannesburg 2002," which includes sections on: reaffirmation of principles and commitments; obstacles and lessons learned; present considerations; and future commitments. 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 WSSD will be held 10 years after the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). UNCED, also known as the Earth Summit, took place on 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; 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 Agenda 21 implementation

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five years after UNCED. The 19th Special Session of the UN General Assembly for the Overall Review and Appraisal of Agenda 21, which was held in New York from 23-27 June 1997, adopted a "Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21." It assessed progress made since UNCED, examined 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 on a 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 for sustainable development.

**PREPCOM I:** CSD-10, acting as the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) 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; modalities of future PrepCom sessions; the tentative organization of work during the Summit; provisional rules of procedure; and arrangements for accreditation and participation of major groups.

**NATIONAL, SUBREGIONAL AND REGIONAL PREPARATORY PROCESSES:** National Preparatory Committees for the WSSD have been established to undertake country-level reviews, to raise awareness, and to mobilize stakeholders. Subregional and regional preparatory meetings for the Johannesburg Summit were to be held between June 2001 and November 2001. Eminent Persons' Roundtables on the WSSD have been held in all five UN regions. The Latin American and Caribbean Preparatory Conference is the third regional meeting, taking place after the European/North American meeting on 25-26 September and the African meeting on 15-18 October 2001.

**LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN EMINENT PERSONS' ROUNDTABLE:** The Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) Roundtable in preparation for the WSSD took place from 18-20 June 2001, in St. Philip, Barbados. Participants emphasized that quality, and not just quantity, of growth has to improve significantly in order to ensure a sustainable long-term future for the region. Experts stressed respect for and protection of traditional knowledge regarding the management of biological diversity and its use, including the use of natural medicine. They advocated the need for recovering traditional practices and technologies in which this region has great experience.

**SUBREGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETINGS:** Meetings in preparation for the LAC Regional Preparatory Conference were held in the four subregions. At the Southern Cone meeting held on 14-15 June 2001, in Santiago, Chile, government representatives indicated that public concern about the need to preserve environmental quality and achieve sustainable development has grown since Rio and that the UNCED process has been advanced by the reinforcement of democracy in the Southern Cone. Emphasis was placed on the methods, procedures and mechanisms that have been established to promote the participation of civil society in the formulation of public policies.

At the Caribbean meeting in Havana, Cuba, held on 28-29 June 2001, participants expressed concern for the subregion's deteriorating marine and coastal ecosystems and loss of biological diversity, and for the increasing frequency and intensity of natural disasters, which have been catastrophic to both human lives and the economy. Representatives emphasized the importance of assessing vulnerability, noting the

lack of data for defining indicators, such as a vulnerability index, with which to measure progress toward sustainable development.

At the Andean area meeting held in Quito, Ecuador, on 2-3 July 2001, representatives reflected on the paradox of Andean nations that, on the one hand, have developed institutions for sustainable development, shown progress in environmental management, brought about innovative processes for social participation and complied with the commitments of principal multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), and, on the other hand, have not fully succeeded in halting or reversing environmental deterioration.

At the Meso-America meeting held in San Salvador, El Salvador, on 16-17 July 2001, participants considered an environmental and socioeconomic outlook for the Meso-American region. Representatives presented and discussed progress and challenges related to their respective national strategies for sustainable development.

**13TH FORUM OF MINISTERS OF THE ENVIRONMENT OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN:** The 13th Forum met in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on 22-23 October 2001, with the objective of enabling the ministers and heads of delegations to examine topics of political, strategic and environmental importance to the region, including the state of vegetative cover and urban environmental vulnerability. They also reviewed and adopted the Regional Environmental Plan of Action for 2002-2005 and associated initiatives to be implemented by UNEP and other members of the Inter-Agency Technical Committee. Delegates also addressed the "environmental agenda in the new global context," in light of recent events in the US.

## REPORT OF THE MEETING

Daniel Blanchard, Secretary of ECLAC, opened the meeting on Tuesday, 23 October, and introduced Chair Celso Lafer, Brazilian Minister of Foreign Affairs. In his opening speech, Lafer highlighted a future vision oriented toward international harmony, based on the interdependence of sovereign States and fed by the heuristic nature of sustainable development, and noted that the incapacity of the international community to galvanize existing resources and reduce the disparities within and among countries exacerbates unsustainable practices. He pointed out similarities between globalization and sustainable development, namely that they contain "a sense of change," and that they are concepts for which there is no single interpretation that can be the basis for political action. Quoting Brazilian President Fernando Henrique Cardoso, he said that the dynamics of environmental issues must be cultural, and stressed that globalization should be sustainable, inclusive and equitable.

José Antonio Ocampo, Executive Secretary of ECLAC, welcomed participants to the meeting and thanked the organizers. He noted that the deliberations represent the culmination of the preceding subregional preparatory meetings, and stressed two objectives: to undertake a review of progress in implementing the UNCED agreements and to identify challenges and new initiatives. He highlighted preparation of the regional Platform for Action, which was drafted based on the subregional meetings and a meeting convened by the Brazilian government, and a UNEP/ECLAC evaluation of challenges and opportunities for sustainable development in the LAC region. Stressing financing for sustainable development as a key issue, he said a panel would be convened on the topic to provide input both to the Financing for Development (FfD) conference to be held in Monterrey, Mexico, in March 2002 and the WSSD. Reflecting on the previous decade, Ocampo noted that the LAC economies have undergone reform and liberalization, however, overall economic growth has remained lower than prior to the debt crisis, and there has not been



great progress in the social sphere. He noted that sustainable development has emerged as a frame of reference on the international agenda, and civil society has become more involved.

He said globalization should be managed and its agenda broadened to include equity. Acknowledging the slow shift to sustainable development in the LAC region, he called for more efforts by countries themselves as well as for fulfilment of developed country commitments to support them.

UNEP Executive Director Klaus Töpfer expressed his satisfaction with the subregional preparations for the meeting, as well as with the material produced for it and the involvement of civil society, young people, the business community and parliamentarians through their respective preparatory meetings.

### **HIGH-LEVEL PANEL ON FINANCING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

On Tuesday, 23 October, Panel Moderator Martus Antonio Rodrigues Tavares, Brazilian Minister of Planning, Budget and Management, introduced members of the high-level panel of regional economic authorities on financing for sustainable development.

Michael Gucovsky, Special Advisor on Sustainable Development to UNDP Administrator Mark Malloch Brown, hoped the discussion would provide input for the FfD conference in addition to the WSSD. He underscored that the main financial resources no longer stem from governments, querying how finance can be channeled toward equitable and sustainable development.

José Antonio Ocampo highlighted five aspects of international financing for sustainable development: external debt and the environment; official development assistance (ODA) for environmental purposes; international financial institutions and the environment; concessional multilateral funds for tackling global problems; and private international financial flows. On domestic financing for sustainable development, he stressed that it rarely exceeds one percent of GDP and has not increased during the 1990s in the LAC countries. He said most financing has been channeled into wastewater treatment, urban waste management and nature conservation, and called for evaluation of trends in public and private environmental expenditure. He supported the use of economic instruments, institution-building and coordinated, consistent measures by environmental and fiscal authorities. He noted increased efforts – such as improving energy efficiency and participating in environmental certification schemes – on the part of the private sector, including by foreign companies in the LAC region.

Alvaro Garcia, Secretary-General of the Chilean Presidency, stressed the importance of financing the implementation of environmental policies and projects. He stated that disjointed efforts to obtain financing may result in poor use of resources, and pointed out difficulties with measuring finance. He shared the Chilean experience, noting that environmental spending has increased by 50 times in the past 10 years. He discussed efforts to improve pollution problems in Santiago and noted difficulties related to internalizing the costs of environmental degradation. He noted that data systems that indicate natural resource use are sparse, adding that inspection systems are weak as well. He maintained that efforts should be targeted toward identifying and strengthening institutions that conduct inspections and enforce compliance. He also called for maximizing the use of economic tools for environmental management because they encourage targeting the private sector.

Eduardo Pizano, Colombian Minister of Economic Development, stated that greater costs associated with environmental policies have decreased the ability of governments to provide employment for more

educated segments of the population, pointing out that those with limited schooling tend to work in the informal sector. He called for increased imports by the EU and the US of products from the LAC region, emphasizing that despite provisions in World Trade Organization (WTO) agreements, some developed countries have maintained protectionist policies. He said that although there is plenty of water in most areas of South America, drinking water and basic sanitation remain a problem that must be addressed.

Víctor Lichtinger, Mexican Minister of the Environment and Natural Resources, stressed that past government policies have caused environmental degradation and unsustainable exploitation of natural resources, and also noted current government incentives for deforestation. He stressed the importance of environmental policies being horizontally integrated into all other sectors from the outset, describing recent Mexican experiences in this regard. On environmental financing, he noted cases where project feasibility had not been factored in and called for the wise use of funds. He said capacity for receiving funds, including among small and medium enterprises (SMEs), must be strengthened. He called for methodologies to assess budgets, and supported the development of investment criteria related to the environment, health and other objectives. He hoped linkages between environmental and other objectives related to financing would be discussed in Monterrey, and said that while developing countries should reform their policies, applying, *inter alia*, the polluter pays principle, international finance to supplement domestic efforts is important.

In response to the panel presentations, Klaus Töpfer stressed target-setting, while ensuring the means of implementation are flexible. He supported capacity and institution building for enforcement and compliance, and called for integration to the point where environment ministries are no longer needed. He said the amount of funds spent do not necessarily correspond with the effectiveness of the outcome, and stressed integrated environmental technology, noting that newer capital stock has better environmental performance. He called for flexible, market-oriented instruments, with an added social element.

Regarding international-level activities, he highlighted debt relief and debt-for-nature swaps, and noted that the LAC region is rich in global goods such as biodiversity and should be compensated for carbon sequestration. He stressed that the WSSD will focus on sustainable development, specifically the interrelationship between environment and development.

Pablo Schneider, Executive Secretary of the Central American Bank for Economic Integration, stressed the need to make available resources for debt relief while protecting global environmental resources and stimulating sustainable development. He highlighted debt-for-environment swaps and the heavily indebted poor country (HIPC) initiative, in which Honduras and Nicaragua are taking part. He called for links between the two, noting that the HIPC initiative is not well funded, and supported the establishment of sustainable development strategies in HIPC countries. He stressed the importance of market mechanisms and of accessing sustainable development and environmental funds, and said more emphasis is being placed on sustainable development by the development banks.

Compton Bourne, Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), emphasized that sustainable development must preserve or enhance future development and is based on intergenerational aspects. He said that although all Caribbean countries have environmental plans that are comprehensive in scope, resources to implement them have generally not been available. Regarding financing, he noted that: public expendi-



tures on sustainable development may be overestimated; ODA has declined during the 1990-2000 period; and foreign direct investment (FDI) has increased, but it is concentrated in three countries – Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and Jamaica. He explained that the CDB has been active in financing environmental projects and projects with environmental implications, and that it applies an environmental checklist to all projects. He said more could be achieved by the CDB if its efforts were combined with those of international donors, and emphasized that efforts to strengthen fiscal systems and opportunities to invest in sustainable development must be boosted by more stable economic growth.

Luis Enrique Berrizbeitia, Andean Development Bank (ADB), discussed four aspects of sustainable development in relation to the ADB. Regarding the economic and financial aspect, he described capital flows in the region, which have been asymmetric, volatile and cyclic. He said the role of development institutions is to strengthen financial systems and to promote higher growth, stability and longevity of international capital flows. On the ecological and environmental aspect, he stated that environmental and social parameters are included in all projects, and that the ADB has supported biodiversity and carbon programmes designed to underwrite green business. On the institutional and political aspect, he described a governance programme directed at strengthening local government. On the social and cultural aspect, he highlighted activities such as support for SMEs and micro-credit schemes.

John Redwood, World Bank Latin America and Caribbean Region, stressed mainstreaming sustainable development, and noted poverty eradication as the World Bank priority. He said economic growth is necessary – but not sufficient – for achieving sustainable development, and relies on sustaining the resource base. Noting threats to the resource base, he said decision-makers face difficult choices and highlighted both win-win and tradeoff situations, which must be understood for appropriate financing mechanisms to be developed. Noting the abundance of natural resources in the LAC countries, he said the market for environmental services such as carbon sequestration is growing, and supported investment in science, technology and research. He said globalization can lead to environmental benefits, but a domestic governmental enabling framework is required, and government regulatory activity should be consistent and transparent. On tradeoffs, he noted tensions between targeted and diffused beneficiaries, as well as timescale issues. He supported strengthening public sector institutions and involving civil society to balance multiple objectives, and stressed the need for keeping better track of public expenditure.

Walter Arensberg, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), stressed the importance of rules and the effective use of resources over increased financing. He said 10% of the IDB portfolio is made up of environmental loans, invested in accordance with the demands of IDB countries. He said the IDB focuses on environmentally sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction, and has instituted a new crosscutting environmental strategy. He called for improved indicators for sustainability of investment.

Moderator Tavares concluded the session by asking whether the key issue might be sustained financing for development rather than financing for sustainable development. He urged caution with regard to the latter formulation at the FfD conference in Monterrey, and stressed the need to focus on the economic and social pillars of sustainable development.

## **DISCUSSION ON THE SUSTAINABILITY OF DEVELOPMENT IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

On Wednesday, 24 October, Alicia Bárcena, ECLAC, outlined the document “The sustainability of development in Latin America and the Caribbean: Challenges and opportunities,” which had been prepared by ECLAC and UNDP, with the participation of various agencies. She emphasized the vulnerability of countries due to interdependence, the most important aspect being environmental vulnerability. Regarding the economic situation of LAC countries, she described financial trends since the 1980s, and said economic recovery has been slow and unstable. She said there has been an increase in poverty and unemployment, which has resulted in fragile democratic systems. She stated that there is lack of continuity of personnel involved in environmental projects and programmes, and called for improvements of ODA and a LAC vision of sustainable development.

Ricardo Sánchez, UNEP, stated that there has been an expansion of legislation on sustainable development in the LAC region, and highlighted a UNEP publication on this issue. He said that despite increased awareness and participation of civil society over the past ten years, environmental vulnerability is higher due to greater environmental degradation, which can only be reversed by addressing poverty. Describing environmental impacts, he highlighted: urban vulnerability due to the disorderly expansion of cities; energy, climate change and ratification of the Kyoto Protocol; issues associated with biodiversity and genetic resources; and the need for water resource management. He also emphasized the expanding international institutional framework of sustainability and the lack of synergy among environmental conventions, and called for higher priority to efficient management with a more rational approach to processing information.

Michael Gucovsky, on behalf of UNDP Administrator Mark Malloch Brown, stressed the focus in Johannesburg is on sustainable development rather than simply environment and development, and warned against a compartmentalized approach. He said sustainable development should be based on a more inclusive approach to globalization that allows people to harness its potential to support human development. He said UNDP supports the LAC regional priorities related to a more flexible, replenished Global Environment Facility (GEF), dynamic implementation of Agenda 21, a more coherent response to climate change, and more attention to the security and vulnerability of the poor.

Manuel Dengo, on behalf of UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs Nitin Desai, provided the context for the regional preparations for the WSSD, including the meetings in the various regions and the preparation of regional platforms. He said the preparations aim at creating and increasing the international dialogue to prepare key elements for the Summit, and stressed the involvement of civil society. He outlined four priority areas for DESA: operationalizing and making sustainable development tangible; managing problems resulting from globalization; making financial and technological resources available; and managing natural resources in an optimal manner.

## **STATEMENTS BY COUNTRIES, UN BODIES AND NGOS**

**COUNTRIES:** Panama noted national institutional and legislative progress in supporting sustainable development. He stressed the economic and social aspects of sustainable development, and highlighted domestic efforts that integrate the three pillars, including introducing information technology in local communities. He noted freshwater as a priority area, and cautioned that scarce resources should not be diverted from sustainable development to the fight against terrorism.



Argentina said globalization needs to be inclusive, sustainable and equitable, noting that millions of people have not benefited from it. He supported humanized, sustainable globalization as the key topic at the WSSD, and suggested its inclusion in the report of the meeting. He called for joint efforts to achieve sustainable development, including by focusing on debt reduction and market access.

Venezuela stressed the social and economic aspects of sustainable development in addition to the environment, and supported an ethical approach and a focus on poverty. She said the current development model has failed, highlighting equity failures, and stressed the foreign debt problem resulting in "ecological debt." She proposed debt relief models based on environmental investment. Uruguay supported regional cooperation to achieve sustainable development and to reduce poverty.

Mexico stressed that recent events in the US and the fight against terrorism should not become an obstacle for sustainable development, which should be seen as a necessary condition for a more equitable and peaceful world. He emphasized that issues related to water and food chain resources and natural disasters be addressed so they do not translate into poverty, marginalization and other problems. He said that globalization offers new challenges and will not alleviate poverty or generate opportunities for everyone. He emphasized: reduction of poverty to protect human health; consideration of genetic resources and the equitable distribution of benefits; the role of women in awareness-raising about ecology and in sustainable development projects; and the rights of indigenous populations in conservation of natural habitats and traditional knowledge.

Jamaica emphasized the importance at the WSSD of determining what sustainable development policies and programmes have worked and why, and examining how these can be reinforced. She suggested economic instruments and environmental stewardship are potential areas for focus at the WSSD, and stressed that the interests and experiences of countries must be taken into account.

Colombia voiced concerns about low attendance at the Panel on Financing Sustainable Development, emphasizing the need for dialogue among ministers from different sectors. He enquired about NGO participation and that of economic and other sectors, pointing out that the meeting is not putting into practice what it is preaching. He said that after 10 years, the general understanding of environmental problems is good, but there is no clear indication of the next steps or how to move ahead. He emphasized the need to establish a new and solid philosophical base and a new scheme of ethics. He pointed out that the solutions that have been put forward over the past 10 years have not reversed environmental degradation, and in fact the situation has grown worse. He urged delegates to respond to the major challenges facing the world because "it is a commitment to the future and to life."

Describing domestic initiatives, Nicaragua stressed the need to create a relationship between society and government. She described a national process to redefine ethics, such as attempts to define "society," and urged bringing forth a coherent position on sustainable development. Comparing the recent situation to pre-UNCED circumstances, specifically the high number of Central American countries suffering from severe internal conflict, El Salvador highlighted progress in peace processes, democratization and in social investments, such as access to basic utilities. She emphasized that "there is no point in having a beautiful environment if there is nothing to eat," pointing to the need for resources to generate employment and provide access to basic services like education. Regarding the effectiveness of investments in different sectors, she said that investing in water quality

can reduce medical care expenditures, and other such investments can boost productivity while reducing costs.

Canada presented its priorities in the lead-up to the WSSD including: international environmental governance; health and environment; conservation and stewardship of natural resources, including with regard to mining and metals and a legal framework on forests; partnerships between all sectors of society; and sustainable communities. He supported bringing sustainable development to the reach of the poor and promoting North-South partnerships.

Bolivia highlighted domestic sustainable development efforts, including institutional strengthening and participatory processes. He called for an ethical framework with regard to sustainable development. Belize noted national initiatives including public-private partnerships and community co-management of conservation areas. She identified two linked priority areas, poverty and inclusion, stressing that the most immediate needs of the poorest are most important, but environmental issues should be considered within all policies.

The US highlighted key elements such as: 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. He stressed the role of major groups and the private sector, and said the WSSD should encourage strengthened domestic frameworks.

Supporting Colombia's statement, Cuba stressed the need to change the collective mentality regarding environmental ethics, and to consider disillusion regarding environmental solutions. She pointed out that environmental problems are faced by current rather than future generations, and that small island developing States (SIDS) are more vulnerable to environmental problems than other countries, calling for full implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action. She said that although environmental issues are separated into different conventions, their interaction is important and is a scientific and tangible reality.

Saint Lucia stated that a holistic, integrated approach to development planning that integrates social, environmental, economic and cultural issues is the only viable sustainable approach for SIDS. He emphasized that the natural resources of SIDS are fragile, limited and vulnerable to natural disasters and unplanned human activities. He endorsed the need to continue to involve civil society, NGOs and the private sector in formulating policy and contributing to an overall national vision. He pointed to issues such as the HIV/AIDS crisis, marginalization of youth, crime and the drug trade as major issues that hamper efforts to achieve sustainable development and to successfully implement the principles of Agenda 21.

The US Virgin Islands emphasized the difficulties experienced by developing countries in adjusting to globalization, noting the unequal benefits. He expressed interest in working with ECLAC regarding application of MEAs to associate member countries.

Paraguay stated that although it is one of the last in the region to implement economic and social reforms, it is trying to address matters related to sustainable development. He highlighted: the recent establishment of an environmental bureau; issues of concern regarding integration of markets through Mercosur and the Free Trade Area of the Americas; and heavy pressures on non-renewable resources.

Chile pointed to the need to increase social, economic, environmental, cultural and political dialogue toward coherent action on sustainable development. He said countries should be able to implement the principle of cultural diversity within sustainability, focusing



on the creation of national capabilities. Opposing overt protectionism, he emphasized the internalization of environmental costs. Peru supported a new strategic approach to sustainable development based on environmental bodies influencing other government institutions and the private sector, noting their need to be flexible and support capacity building.

#### **INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND NGOS:**

Alister McIntyre, Chair of the LAC Regional Eminent Persons' Roundtable in preparation for the WSSD, reported on this meeting, noting conclusions on the need to strengthen democracy, civil society participation and governance for sustainable development. He stressed the role of moral and spiritual values, and of international cooperation.

A representative of the Latin America Parliament Commission introduced the "Declaration of Guatemala," adopted by this group at its fifteenth session on 12 October 2001. He underscored the role of parliamentarians in assuring sustainable development and adherence with the Rio agreements, and assured parliamentarians' commitment in this regard.

A representative of Brazilian NGO Organizations reported on the NGO forum held from 18-20 October 2001, in Rio de Janeiro, stating that the NGOs did not have access to the Platform for Action and were not involved in the drafting process. He outlined the NGO platform drafted at the forum, which:

- notes that failure to fulfill the Rio commitments has exacerbated the socio-environmental crisis, increased vulnerability and uncertainty, and made democracy in the world more fragile;
- describes issues associated with poverty, inequality and social marginalization; and
- addresses biodiversity, forests, climate change, globalization and trade, financing and vulnerability.

The Brazilian Enterprise Council emphasized the importance of corporate and environmental responsibility, and described business concerns such as: unilateral vs. multilateral agreements; market access; income disparities; and foreign debt. He said business is aware that sustainable development is synonymous with survival, especially for those who want to be in the market in the future. Since the issue of sustainability remains with the elite, it is difficult to address the informal economy and upgrade the quality of life. He maintained that the money that financed the episode in New York "came from tax havens that facilitate the drug trade, terrorism and corruption," and called for promoting a more ethical and multilateral discussion.

The Pan-American Health Organization encouraged the strengthening of integrated planning and expressed interest in cooperating with other regional organizations on sustainable development. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization supported long-term programmes for sustainable development, and their effective communication to the public. The International Labor Organization noted links between its activities and sustainable development. The GEF highlighted its activities in the region, including the allocation of US\$1.18 billion to 120 projects, which have attracted twice as much in co-financing.

The UN Secretariat for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction expressed satisfaction with the fact that the Platform for Action considers issues related to disaster management. The Earth Council called attention to the Earth Charter – a comprehensive normative document produced after consultation of tens of thousands of people – as a framework for considering sustainable development. The Council of Mining Ministries of the Americas noted environmental considerations and opportunities for poverty alleviation related to mining. He recommended including discussion of these issues at the intergovernmental level.

#### **ADOPTION OF THE PLATFORM FOR ACTION**

On Wednesday, 24 October, Everton Vargas, Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, presented the "Rio de Janeiro Platform for Action on the Road to Johannesburg 2002," noting the text had been developed based on the contributions from the four subregional preparatory meetings, consolidated during a meeting on 17-18 October in Brasilia and then circulated for comment. He said the text had been fine-tuned during drafting sessions on 22-23 October, and consists of four sections on: reaffirmation of principles and commitments; obstacles and lessons learned; present considerations; and future commitments.

He noted consensus on the document, and emphasized that it represents the first time an entire region proposes that Johannesburg focus on globalization.

Argentina asked that reference to environmental problems due to population growth be deleted, since growth rates are decreasing. Jamaica pointed out that not all countries suffer from population problems, and suggested adding text specifying "in some parts of the region," which was agreed. Colombia called for new text under "obstacles and lessons learned" on ethics, and additional references to ethics in various paragraphs. Chair Lafer pointed out that there is a reference to ethics in a paragraph on central themes for the WSSD, and the first request for new text was accepted but additional references rejected. Cuba suggested that the text of President Cardoso's speech during the Special Session be included. With these changes and additions, the Platform for Action was adopted.

#### **RIO DE JANEIRO PLATFORM FOR ACTION ON THE ROAD TO JOHANNESBURG 2002**

The Platform consists of four sections on: A) reaffirmation of principles and commitments; B) obstacles and lessons learned; C) present considerations; and D) future commitments.

**REAFFIRMATION OF PRINCIPLES AND COMMITMENTS:** Section A on reaffirmation of principles and commitments recalls, *inter alia*, the commitments at UNCED, as well as the Rio Conventions and subsequent legal instruments, and the declaration of the Conference on the Sustainable Development of SIDS. It also recalls the commitments of the World Summit on Social Development and the Conference on Human Settlements, and reaffirms the right of States to exploit their own resources pursuant to their own environmental and development policies, and reiterates the commitment to the precautionary principle and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities of developed and developing countries.

**OBSTACLES AND LESSONS LEARNED:** Section B on obstacles and lessons learned:

- considers the WSSD an opportunity to evaluate progress since UNCED, noting deteriorating trends;
- believes that developments related to democracy and peace have helped incorporate environment into development processes and make people-centered sustainable development a priority;
- recognizes the importance of civil society participation;
- emphasizes that unsustainable production and consumption patterns and some trade and financial mechanisms in developed countries jeopardize the achievement of sustainable development;
- regrets the lack of measures to ensure technology transfer from developed countries;
- recognizes the need for a stable, predictable, open and inclusive international economic system;
- rejects policies that distort international trade, and urges the elimination of export subsidies and improved market access;
- expresses concern regarding possible environmental conditionality and an abusive interpretation of the precautionary principle;



- recognizes the need to streamline international processes related to sustainable development;
- recognizes the special needs of sensitive ecosystems, including mountains; and
- renews commitment to the GEF and other multilateral finance agencies.

**PRESENT CONSIDERATIONS:** Section C on present considerations includes paragraphs on international cooperation to improve the living conditions of present and future generations, on efforts to reinforce subregional and regional cooperation and meet the needs of the most vulnerable, and on making globalization sustainable. It emphasizes that environmental policies need to be integrated to avoid irreversible damage and recognizes the need for wider understanding of an integrative sustainable development approach and of education and awareness-raising. The section further highlights the promotion of science and technological development and innovation, including information technologies, and the roles of indigenous and local communities and of women.

**FUTURE COMMITMENTS:** Section D on future commitments includes three subsections on: the institutional structure for sustainable development; financing and technology transfer; and formulation of action. Regarding the institutional structure for sustainable development, the Platform, *inter alia*, formulates the commitment to develop local, national and regional capacities, to strengthen institutions to promote integration of environmental, social and economic policies, and to promote synergies between conventions and organizations with an environmental mandate at the national and international levels.

Regarding financing and technology transfer, the document:

- stresses the need for a sufficient and predictable level of new and additional resources for the implementation of Agenda 21;
- reiterates the 0.7% of GNP for ODA target for developed countries;
- encourages the participation of the private sector;
- calls for support to the GEF;
- recognizes the burden of debt and debt-servicing and underscores the need for debt relief for highly-indebted developing countries;
- recommends that the FfD conference address financing for national public goods with global benefits;
- reaffirms that developing countries can only fulfill international sustainable development goals if they receive adequate financing and technology transfers and that development and poverty eradication are their overriding priorities; and
- calls for market access for developing country products, noting complementarities between trade, investment, growth, environmental quality and an open and inclusive world economic system.

Under formulation of actions, the Platform, *inter alia*:

- calls for universal ratification of the CBD, equitable access to the benefits afforded by the use of genetic resources, protection of traditional knowledge and the entry into force of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety before the WSSD;
- underscores the importance of assessing vulnerability and defining indicators in this regard, reducing vulnerability to natural disasters, and recognizing the vulnerability of SIDS;
- promotes integrated water resource management and international cooperation schemes for water management;
- supports international cooperation for sustainable forest management;
- underscores the need to diversify the energy supply and foster energy efficiency;
- calls for the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol by the WSSD,

- and for climate change adaptation programmes;
- calls for the ratification of the chemicals conventions, and underscores the links between environment and health;
- stresses the need for effective urban planning and land management, recognition of the relationship between population and the environment, further efforts toward urban management including the promotion of more rational production and consumption patterns, and integration of sustainable development into public policies; and
- suggests the cross-sectoral issues of finance, science and technology, capacity building and vulnerability as agenda items for the WSSD, and, as its central theme, "Towards a new globalization that ensures equitable, inclusive and sustainable development."

### SPECIAL SESSION

On Tuesday, 23 October, the meeting was suspended for a Special Session with Brazilian President Fernando Henrique Cardoso. In a speech to delegates, President Cardoso emphasized that although security and defense issues are moving to the fore of the international policy arena, environmental issues should not lose status, stressing that "terrorism cannot gag the agenda for international cooperation." He suggested that finding answers to sustainability problems requires change that is not only material-based, but also has ethical grounds within society. He discussed equity issues related to the agriculture sector and farmers specifically, and emphasized that the costs of sustainability must be shared by all. Regarding climate change, he called for continuation of progress with the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol and its mechanisms, such as the Clean Development Mechanism. He stressed acknowledgement of the common but differentiated rights and responsibilities between advanced and emerging countries, and said that there can be no growth without sustainability, and no sustainability without access to markets or financial assistance. He said that although Latin America has an enormous amount of natural resources, these are vulnerable. This increases the region's responsibility and should motivate it to tackle environmental issues.

On the objective of sustainable development, he said there is an ethical implication that entails adherence to principles such as transparency, participation of all groups, and the environment as a common heritage for all citizens.

Referring to political philosopher Antonio Gramsci, he stated that civil engagement requires permeability of the state, because the state cannot presume that it alone is capable of establishing the foundations of a future order. He also compared awareness of environmental issues to the development of the atomic bomb, in that the issues transcend the state and associated problems are universal. He suggested that the 21st century should be one of solidarity because of the need for survival of the human race. Regarding sustainable development, he stated that it is impossible to make effective decisions if they are not the result of shared action, and called for progress toward a world characterized not by states but by people, awareness of rights and duties, and creation of solidarity among humans.

### CLOSING PLENARY

In his closing remarks on Wednesday afternoon, 24 October, José Antonio Ocampo stated that the Platform for Action will become part of the international sustainable development process that will culminate in the WSSD. He thanked the Brazilian government and people, as well as UNEP and UNDP for their work. On behalf of ECLAC, he



reaffirmed the organization's commitment to continue the process, along with member countries and civil society.

Ricardo Sánchez echoed the dedication to cooperative efforts between ECLAC and UNEP, forecasting that they will approach the WSSD with the best coordination possible to ensure that the objectives proposed for the LAC region are achieved.

Vice-Chair Alvaro Sapag (Chile) said the Conference had provided the opportunity to exchange ideas, perspectives and realities of the different countries of the region, and to observe the participation of civil society. He thanked the Brazilian hosts for their hard work and flexibility that led the Conference to achieving its goals and tasks. He also thanked the various UN bodies for their support. He said the LAC region has enormous environmental potential, but has to face reality with creativity, flexibility and solidarity in order to achieve sustainable development. He invited delegates to watch a short video about the Conference with the theme "Amigos Para Siempre" ("Friends Forever"), produced by the Brazilian Environment and Foreign Affairs ministries, and called the meeting to a close at 2:15 pm.

## A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE MEETING

### "AMIGOS PARA SIEMPRE"

In the same complex where the 1992 Earth Summit was held, delegates from the Latin American and Caribbean region met to continue their regional preparation process for the WSSD. In relation to preparatory meetings in other regions, the process was self-contained, highlighting themes such as the Latin American debt crisis, debt-for-environment swaps and biodiversity, in addition to the major general themes emerging from the region – financing for sustainable development and the concept of a "new globalization" – to be promoted at PrepCom II in New York early next year. The meeting was tightly managed yet roughly organized, keeping the countries of the region together but not involving other stakeholders. Whether these different players will remain "friends forever" – or even until the next PrepCom – and whether this tight friendship can be inclusive of the rest of the G-77/China and civil society, remains to be seen.

### FINANCING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The UNECE regional preparatory meeting for the WSSD, held a month before the LAC meeting, first mentioned the links between the FfD process and the WSSD. The LAC meeting devoted significantly more attention to these links, although many participants – especially from developed country environment ministries – arrived completely unaware of the FfD process. With the FfD meeting to take place in the LAC region, and an afternoon session devoted to a Panel on Financing Sustainable Development, all delegates left with a clear sense of these links being a regional priority.

The Platform for Action seeks to ensure the links between the two processes are clear by including a recommendation that delegates to the FfD address "the need to explore innovative and more efficient mechanisms for financing the protection of national public goods that afford global benefits and that they propose means of linking the environmental dimension with countries' fiscal policies in order to effectively incorporate financial sectors into the efforts to achieve sustainable development goals." The Platform also reaffirms that developing countries only can fulfill international sustainable development goals if they receive adequate financing and technology transfer and if development and poverty eradication are their overriding priorities.

However, not all observers were wholly pleased with linking the two processes, noting that the agendas of both conferences run the risk

of becoming overburdened to the point of collapse. Some also questioned whether countries have the staff and capacity at the national level to understand and constructively address the links.

### SUSTAINABLE GLOBALIZATION?

Globalization emerged as a primary theme of the LAC meeting, specifically, the need to somehow give globalization a human face or make it supportive of sustainable development following a decade in which most of the poor in the world have failed to reap any benefits from the process. This fuzzy idea was not easily defined, and rifts among countries were apparent with Latin America preferring reference to "sustainable globalization," and the Caribbean Community wishing to focus attention on the inequitable impacts of globalization. During the subregional meetings some participants had taken a strong "anti-present system" stance, but by the end of the regional meeting delegates had hesitantly agreed on Platform language referring to a "new globalization" that ensures equitable, inclusive and sustainable development.

While some project that this theme is likely to become a major topic of discussion at the global level, it remains to be seen how it will play out. The UNECE region agreed on "making globalization work for sustainable development" as a theme for the WSSD. However, the Africa region is championing "People, Planet and Prosperity." With such divergences, the G-77/China will have to find a definition that works for itself.

Some more pessimistic observers questioned whether controlling or managing globalization is even possible, and cautioned that precious time could be devoted to futile debate. They also noted a complete lack of reference to the upcoming WTO Doha Ministerial Conference in November and its possible implications for globalization.

### PROCEDURAL ISSUES

The debate regarding the proposed "new globalization" theme of the WSSD did not surface at all during the plenary sessions, and in fact was only furtively discussed in the corridors of Rio Centro. This was seen as emblematic of a number of procedural issues that concerned delegates. First, many participants were baffled as to the organization of the meeting, pointing out that the ever-changing agenda made following the proceedings very difficult. Others expressed confusion about the Brazilian decision to draft the Platform for Action in closed meetings, while a few were clearly disgruntled because these meetings tended not to be announced. In a few instances, participants not allowed into the negotiations had to inform unaware ECLAC members that the meetings were indeed taking place.

However, a few delegates highlighted the benefits of having closed meetings by comparing this process with the more open proceedings at the African and North American/European regional meetings: the closed meetings allowed participants to clearly state their agenda without fear of reprisals by observers, while more public sessions encourage more politically motivated and less meaningful statements.

In addition, many were disappointed that there was little opportunity for interchange among participants, an aspect that had been eagerly anticipated. Because of a number of delays in the schedule, there was no time for discussion after the panel on financing sustainable development, considered by some as the most salient issue in the WSSD process. One participant sadly observed that this conference had been "the least interactive process seen in a long time."

Similarly, several delegates noted the irony and mourned the dissipation of the "Rio spirit" of meaningful integration of civil society and government, pointing out the peculiar timing of the NGO forum,





which had been the week prior to the Conference, thereby guaranteeing that high-level officials would not be present. While there were a few examples of integration of civil society representatives into government delegations, such as that of Nicaragua, whose WSSD preparation process has been heralded by some as a model for all countries, skeptics said that generally civil society is still viewed "as a tool to be picked up and used" at governments' convenience.

Looking towards the future, an underlying but essential factor will be how groups coalesce along the road to Johannesburg, and how the outputs of the various regional meetings that stress different goals for the Summit can be reconciled into a single meaningful package. Of more immediate concern, however, are the cooperative efforts for the PrepComs within and among regions, within the G-77/China, and between countries and civil society – or in other words, can everyone be included in the circle of friends?

## THINGS TO LOOK FOR BEFORE THE WSSD

**2002 WSSD REGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETINGS:** The final regional preparatory meeting for the Asia and Pacific Region will take place in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, from 27-29 November 2001. For more information, contact: Hiroko Morita-Lou, DESA; tel: +1-212-963-8813; fax: +1-212-963-4260; e-mail: morita-lou@un.org; Internet: <http://www.johannesburgsummit.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 Fuad Abulfotuh; tel: +20-3-562 25 78; fax +20-3-561 77 75; 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 to 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](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>

**GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY COUNCIL:** The GEF Council meeting is expected to consider issues relating to designation of land degradation as a fourth focal area of its financing and is expected to take place on 6-7 December 2001, in Washington, DC. It will be preceded by an NGO consultation on 5 December. For more information, contact: Mohammed El-Ashry, CEO; tel: +1-202-473 3202; +1-202-522 3245; email: gef@gefweb.org; Internet: <http://www.gefweb.org/>

**SOUTHERN NGO SUMMIT:** This summit will take place in January 2002 in Algiers, Algeria, to prepare for the WSSD. For more information, contact: Esmeralda Brown, Southern Caucus Chair, New York; tel: +1-212-682-3633; fax: +1-212-682-5354; e-mail: ebrown@gbgm-umc.org; Internet: <http://www.southngosummit.org/>

**SECOND WSSD PREPARATORY SESSION:** This meeting will take place from 28 January to 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 leading international trade, finance and development-related organizations. For more information, contact: Harris Gleckman, Financing for Development Coordinating Secretariat; tel: +1-212-963-4690; fax: +1-212-963-0443; 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 to 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 or Zehra Aydin-Sipos, 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/](http://www.unep.org/children_youth/)

**FOURTH WSSD PREPARATORY SESSION:** This meeting will take place from 27 May to 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 or Zehra Aydin-Sipos, DESA (see above).