



SUMMARY OF THE ASIA-PACIFIC ROUNDTABLE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND THE HIGH-LEVEL ASIA- PACIFIC REGIONAL MEETING FOR THE WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: 27 – 29 NOVEMBER 2001

The Asia-Pacific Roundtable on Sustainable Development and the High-Level Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) took place at the Intercontinental Hotel in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, from 27-29 November 2001. The Roundtable and Regional Meeting were attended by over 190 representatives from 46 Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) States, two associate members of ESCAP, four non-ESCAP UN member States, and over 220 representatives from UN agencies, multilateral financing institutions, NGOs and other stakeholders. The Regional Meeting produced two outcomes: a Chairman's Summary of the Roundtable; and the Phnom Penh Regional Platform on Sustainable Development for Asia and the Pacific (Platform), which includes a regional assessment of Agenda 21 implementation, key issues and priorities for sustainable development, follow-up actions, and financing sustainable development. Delegates to the meeting braved marathon negotiations that stretched early into the morning hours on the last day to produce a Platform that many described as perhaps the best of the products coming out of the five regional preparatory meetings for the WSSD.

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 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 Earth 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 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

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This issue of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* © <enb@iisd.org> is written and edited by Wendy Jackson <wendy@iisd.org>, Wagaki Mwangi <wagaki@iisd.org> and Alison Ormsby <alison@iisd.org>. The Digital Editor is Leila Mead <leila@iisd.org>. The Operations Manager is Marcela Rojo <marcela@iisd.org> and the On-Line Assistant is Diego Noguera <diego@iisd.org>. The Editor is Pamela S. Chasek, Ph.D. <pam@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 Nairobi ©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>.



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 held between June 2001 and November 2001. Eminent Persons' Roundtables on the WSSD have been held in all five UN regions. The Asia-Pacific meeting was the last of the regional preparations, taking place after the European/North American meeting on 25-26 September, the African meeting from 15-18 October, the Latin American and Caribbean meeting on 23-24 October, and the West Asian meeting on 24 October.

MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC: This conference was held in Kitakyushu, Japan, from 31 August to 5 September 2001, and was attended by participants at the ministerial level from countries in the ESCAP region and beyond. Among the major outcomes of the Conference were the: Regional Action Programme for Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development 2001-2005, the Vision for the 21st Century: Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific; the Regional Message for the 10-Year Review of UNCED; and the Kitakyushu Initiative for a Clean Environment.

SUBREGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETINGS: Five subregional meetings were held in preparation for the Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting. The first day of each subregional meeting was dedicated to a stakeholder consultation, except for the Pacific subregional meeting, which included both governments and stakeholders. In addition to identifying their priority concerns, each subregion elaborated its own action programme.

The Northeast Asia meeting took place from 26-28 July 2001, in Beijing, China. Stakeholders identified a number of issues, including major group participation and consumption patterns. The intergovernmental meeting considered priority cluster topics addressing, *inter*

alia, finance and technology, cooperative arrangements, and natural resource management.

At the South Pacific meeting, held from 4-7 September 2001, in Apia, Samoa, the multi-stakeholder dialogue elaborated a series of objectives related to, *inter alia*: oceans; natural resources; climate change and variability and sea level rise; island vulnerability; energy; health and governance; capacity building; and financial resources.

At the Central Asia meeting, held from 19-21 September 2001, in Almaty, Kazakhstan, stakeholders identified deficiencies in the draft subregional paper, and the intergovernmental meeting adopted decisions on, *inter alia*: support for the WSSD process; the draft report as a basis for further work; and finalization of the report following submissions.

At the South Asia meeting held from 27-29 September 2001, in Colombo, Sri Lanka, stakeholders identified 14 priority issues and subregional problems, and the intergovernmental meeting identified thematic priorities, including: poverty elimination; management of population growth; natural resource conservation; and securing the economic base.

The Southeast Asia meeting was held from 17-19 October 2001, in Manila, the Philippines. Stakeholders noted the inadequate coverage of the social and economic dimensions of sustainable development. Governments noted the need for up-to-date data and statistics, and identified issues needing further consideration, including globalization, trade liberalization, corruption and governance.

REPORT OF THE MEETING

ASIA-PACIFIC ROUNDTABLE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

OPENING SESSION: Cielito Habito, Special Advisor to the Earth Council, (Philippines), called the Roundtable to order at 9:20 am on Tuesday, 27 November. He stated that he had been asked to Chair the roundtable on behalf of Emil Salim, Chair of the Asia-Pacific Roundtable on Sustainable Development, and invited ESCAP Executive Secretary Kim Hak-Su to deliver an opening statement on behalf of the organizers.

In his welcoming address, Kim Hak-Su emphasized the region's interest in an open, participatory and transparent UNCED review process. He said the Roundtable was convened to consolidate the assessment of achievements, identify major constraints and new initiatives, and make new commitments toward overcoming constraints and fostering progress.

Habito stressed the need to: consider sustainable development holistically and in an integrated manner at the sectoral, planning, governance and implementation levels; focus on the "how to" elements of achieving sustainable development; and find concrete ways to operationalize partnerships between government, civil society and the private sector.

Welcoming participants, Cambodian Minister of Environment Mok Mareth highlighted water, coastal and transboundary issues and called for: adaptive approaches to address sustainable development at the national level; poverty reduction through multi-sectoral, gender-integrated economic growth; and collaboration between developed



and developing countries for technology development and skills transfer.

REGIONAL PLATFORM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC: Introducing the draft Platform, Ravi Sawhney, Environment and Natural Resources Development Division, ESCAP, expressed hope that the meeting would communicate to the global process the central role of the Asia-Pacific region in sustainable development, and highlighted challenges associated with the region's diversity.

Reports of the Regional Roundtables: Outlining the East Asia and Pacific Regional Roundtable held from 9-11 July 2001, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Nordin H.J. Hasan (Malaysia) said the Roundtable emphasized, *inter alia*: a sustainable development philosophy based on local and regional values and lifestyles, which are subject to commercialism and consumerism; poverty as an impediment to achieving sustainable development; and a multilateral approach to food security.

Noting that the region comprises approximately half of the world's population, Asylbek Aidaraliev (Kyrgyzstan) highlighted the issues discussed at the Roundtable held from 30 July to 1 August 2001, in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, such as globalization, socioeconomic issues, international governance reform, financial resources and technology transfer, consumerism, and peace and security.

Reports of the Subregional Meetings: Chair Habito invited the presentation of brief reports on the subregional meetings for both the intergovernmental and stakeholders' meetings.

Bulat Yessekin (Kazakhstan) said that the Central Asia meeting identified water management as a major concern and supported an initiative to create public subregional sustainable development forums. Reporting on outcomes of the stakeholders' meeting, Andrey Aranbaev (Uzbekistan) noted the lack of implementation of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and concerns relating to water, desertification and biodiversity, and drew attention to the need for a subregional coordination mechanism on agreements relating to natural resource use and management.

On behalf of stakeholders of the South Asia subregion, Raghunathan Rajamani (India) called for action to eliminate poverty, control population growth, promote accountability, consider issues of governance, enhance global market access, and ensure implementation of the Rio accords.

For the Southeast Asia region, Delfin Ganapin (Philippines), noting the importance of civil society participation and good governance, called for capacity building to integrate the three pillars of sustainable development, including moral and religious aspects, and for the establishment of a regional sustainable development information center.

Park Eun-kyung (Republic of Korea) highlighted the main issues identified at the Northeast Asia subregional meeting, including participation of major groups, education, desertification and land degradation, and biodiversity loss.

Karibaiti Taoaba (Republic of Kiribati) noted key issues for the Pacific region such as ocean management, climate change, island vulnerability, energy, health and governance, capacity building, and financial resources for sustainable development.

Reporting on regional industry consultations held on 22 November 2001 in Bangkok, Thailand, Editha Cabrera (San Miguel Corporation, the Philippines) called for, *inter alia*: integration of regional small- and medium-sized enterprises into sustainable development initiatives; improved consumer awareness; and consideration of the impacts of climate change on business.

Discussion: Chair Habito invited comments from participants. Global Environmental Action (GEA) emphasized the leadership role of civil society organizations, particularly at the local level, and described a GEA initiative to support access to information among environmental NGOs in developing countries. The International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) reported on the findings of its global survey on Local Agenda 21, noting elements of local sustainable development such as: high cooperation between all layers of government; investment in local leadership development; and a new culture of sustainability fostered by local government.

ICLEI-Japan, in a supplementary intervention, reported the outcomes of The World Environmental Conference held in Sendai, Japan, from 10-12 November 2001, stressing: the important role of cities; close inter-city cooperation; a shifting emphasis from planning to implementing; and promotion of various forms of environmental management systems.

The Asian Women's Network presented a declaration from the Asian Women's Conference on Gender, Finance and Sustainable Development, held from 26-30 October 2001, highlighting, *inter alia*, increasing poverty and diminishing human insecurity. The Regional Institute for Environmental Technology proposed adding references in the draft Platform to investment as an aspect of economic transformation and to academia and corporate finance as stakeholder groups.

The Indonesian Forum for Environment stressed the need for more regional cooperation on issues such as the timber trade and depletion of fish stocks in the South Pacific, and the need to address high-level corruption, which has hindered the implementation of sustainable development. The Regional Environmental Center for Central Asia highlighted consultations among governments, NGOs and scientists from 11 former Soviet republics, which addressed issues such as poverty, political conflict, governance and public participation. APPROTECH Asia observed that in the draft Platform, biodiversity and natural resource conservation concerns focus on *ex situ* or "virtual" conservation, and called for text ensuring future access to genetic resources.

The Tebtebba Foundation, on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Peoples' Forum, pointed out critical sustainable development issues absent from the draft Platform, such as environmental and social security, biopiracy, misappropriation of resources by corporations, and alternative development approaches.

Stressing that gender is integral to sustainable development, the Asia-Pacific Peoples' Forum Women's Caucus highlighted the differentiated effects of globalization on women, such as severed access health services, education and employment. The Japanese Forum for Johannesburg emphasized: environmental education and enhancement of environmental awareness; strengthening of community activities; and effective partnerships among all sectors.



A representative of the Citizens' Alliance for Consumer Protection of Korea called for energy efficiency, improvement of consumer information, development of affordable and clean energy sources, and demand-side management. The Third World Network elaborated key sustainable development issues, globalization and militarism, and stated that if the region was proud to be a model of diversity, then it could not expect to have only one model of sustainable development.

The National Council of Women's Organizations called for a sustainable development plan including cultivation of intellectual and leadership qualities. The NeoSynthesis Research Center highlighted ecological restoration and shared examples of experiences and technology used in Sri Lanka to address environmental destruction. The Asia-Pacific Forum of Environmental Journalists noted the role of journalists in raising environmental awareness and supported creation of a regional information center. The World Assembly of Youth called on the WSSD to take youth into special consideration in Agenda 21 implementation and with regard to participation in preparations and delegations to the WSSD.

The World Wide Fund for Nature-Philippines supported: multi-stakeholder sustainability assessments of trade policies to cover economic, social and environmental impacts; primacy of specific trade obligations set out in MEAs over relevant WTO rules; elimination of harmful subsidies; and inclusion of marine and freshwater biomes in the CBD. The Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry noted the increasing marginalization of least developed countries (LDCs) and called for access by LDCs to developed country markets.

The Asian Disaster Reduction Center noted the increasing social and economic impacts of natural disasters, particularly in the region, and said the combat and reduction of natural disasters was insufficiently addressed in Agenda 21, calling for its consideration at the WSSD. IUCN drew attention to a South Asian initiative highlighting possible regional environment conflicts and hotspots and called for civil society involvement in deliberations.

Indonesia proposed a specific reference to forest resources within the draft Platform, supported use of natural resources in sensitive areas only when helping local people, and reported on key issues raised by the Regional Forum on Business Opportunities and Sustainable Development.

Chair Habito summarized the main points of the discussion, which would be reflected in his Chairman's Summary of the Roundtable.

SPECIAL SESSION ON FINANCING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: This session consisted of presentations by panelists followed by open discussion. In his opening remarks, Session Chair Kalman Mizsei, Assistant Administrator and UNDP Regional Director for Europe and the CIS, noted success at the national level in capacity building and regulations development and emphasized the need to link supply and demand sides and to work on law enforcement. Jagdish Pokharel, Planning Commission, Government of Nepal, noted the positive results in financing for sustainable development, such as: tax reforms; environmental taxes; reduced subsidies; and privatization of inefficient sectors.

Stating that annual US expenditures on ice cream and cosmetics are approximately US\$2 billion each, Cielito Habito said the avail-

ability of resources for sustainable development is not the issue, but rather its appropriate distribution. Regarding domestic resource mobilization, he said civil society and the private sector should meet their obligations. On international financial resources, he said dwindling levels of official development assistance (ODA) should not be accepted and developed countries should not be "let off the hook," and suggested that private resources should account for a larger share of sustainable development financing either through enforcement or philanthropic action.

Stating that, unless there was a fundamental turnaround in attitudes, the next ten years would be as futile as the past ten, Lin See Yan, Lin Associates, expressed disappointment regarding: insufficient progress made to meet ODA targets; minimal private sector participation in sustainable development financing; and lack of implementing innovative financial mechanisms. He said change will occur only if economic ministers are directly involved and if sustainable development is viewed as a global common requiring global solutions, and proposed specific actions.

Discussion: Emphasizing that investment is more than just a financial mechanism, the Regional Institute of Environmental Technology emphasized the need for an agreement that balances investors' rights against obligations for investment to satisfy recipient country public needs. The Forum for Environmental Journalists of Bangladesh emphasized access to funding by developing countries, supported domestic resource mobilization, and encouraged consultative and participatory policy processes.

Women's Solidarity for Human Rights described destructive and risky projects financed by governments and international banks, reported extensive corruption, and called for people-centered, environmentally-friendly development. The National Council of Women's Organizations called for political will. The Indonesian Forum for Environment said developing countries should not focus only on new financing from developed countries, but should reduce corruption to increase domestic resources.

A representative of the International NGO Network on Drought and Desertification-Central Asia expressed concern over limited civil society participation at the meeting and over the effectiveness of international aid, noting that most aid returns to donor countries through payment for, *inter alia*, foreign technical advisors, terming the practice a "double lie," both to the developing country community and to developed country taxpayers.

The Foundation for Sustainable Development elaborated the negative effects of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank and Asian Development Bank (ADB) economic "rescue package," stressing that such effects need to be recognized in the consideration of financing for sustainable development. The Tebtebba Foundation noted that natural resources are concentrated in developing countries, especially indigenous lands. The Third World Network called for sophisticated and diverse approaches to ensure that resources stay in developing countries. Focus on the Global South discussed debt repayment burdens and the need to build local capacity and to develop alternative structures for economic and financial governance at the national and international levels.

In response to concerns regarding participation, Ravi Sawhney pointed out the venue's space constraints and encouraged civil society



organizations to interact with government delegations in the corridors. Also in response, Lin See Yan said international monetary reform is underway and stressed the importance of domestic resource mobilization. Cielito Habito supported South-South cooperation as an alternative and efficient use of limited development resources.

CLOSING SESSION: Closing the Roundtable, Chair Habito summarized key points raised, stating that progress had been made with regard to Agenda 21, but it has been far from satisfactory. Many speakers noted that the Asia-Pacific region is the most diverse region in the world, and priorities for action need to take this into account. Participants identified local, national, subregional, regional and global priority issues including, *inter alia*, poverty, globalization, capacity building, governance, financing for sustainable development, external debt burden, biotechnology, gender equity consideration, investment, the WTO, unsustainable consumption and environmental security and safety. Chair Habito invited comments, and participants suggested topics omitted from the summary, namely disaster management and militarism. At 4:30 pm, Chair Habito officially closed the Roundtable.

ASIA-PACIFIC HIGH-LEVEL REGIONAL MEETING

OPENING SESSION: Eric Chong Tee Lim, WSSD Coordinator, Cambodia UNDP Office, opened the regional meeting on Wednesday, 28 November, at 2:15 pm. Welcoming delegates, ESCAP Executive Secretary Kim Hak-Su stressed poverty, globalization and emerging social issues as ESCAP's future priorities that would be informed by the draft Platform.

UNEP Deputy Executive Director Shafqat Kakakhel emphasized poverty and globalization as the two major sustainable development challenges for the region, described the region's draft Platform as succinct yet comprehensive, and said the WSSD challenge was to reinvigorate the commitment to work for sustainable development.

Noting the region's economic changes since the 1960s, Kalman Mizsei stressed the need to build on Rio achievements and to ensure the 2002 Summit launches a bold new plan that assures human security. Rolf Zelius, Chief, Office of Environment and Social Development, ADB, said too much attention had been placed on producing reports, and called for the involvement of environment, planning and financing agencies in action plans.

On behalf of Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs Nitin Desai, Hiroko Morita-Lou highlighted four areas where the WSSD must show results: operationalizing sustainable development; managing globalization challenges; securing financial and technological resources; and managing natural resources conservation.

In his inaugural address, Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen reflected on Cambodia's recent transition to peace, highlighted domestic rehabilitation efforts to eradicate poverty, maintain stability, improve living standards, promote sustainable development, and integrate into the regional and global economy. He elaborated on national initiatives to ensure the rational use of natural resources and efforts to combat corruption, and described the links between landmines, poverty, environmental degradation and social equity.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS: Kim Hak-Su then invited nominations for the election of Bureau members for the meeting. India proposed, and delegates elected by acclamation, the following officers: Bureau Chair Mok Mareth (Cambodia); Vice-Chairs Vardan

Ayvazyam (Armenia), Shahjahan Siraj (Bangladesh), Dato Haji Ahmad Haji Jumat (Brunei Darussalam), Deng Nan (China), Nabel Makarim (Indonesia), Hironori Hamanaka (Japan), Radbek Eshmambetov (Kyrgyzstan), Michael Konelios (Marshall Islands), Resty Shotaro (Micronesia), Chimiddorj Ganzorig (Mongolia), Ramon Paje (the Philippines), Tuala Sale Tagaloa (Samoa), Matkarim Rajapov (Turkmenistan), Usmonkul Shokirov (Tajikistan) and Bui Manh Hai (Vietnam); Rapporteur Effendy Sumardja (Indonesia); and Secretary of the Meeting, Ravi Sawhney (ESCAP).

Chair Mok Mareth presented, and delegates adopted, the agenda (ENR/HRM/WSSD/L.1 and ENR/HRM/WSSD/L.2).

STATEMENTS BY COUNTRIES, UN BODIES AND NGOS: On Wednesday afternoon, 28 November, and Thursday, 29 November, Plenary sessions were dedicated to general statements on the assessment of regional implementation of Agenda 21, key regional sustainable development issues and goals and specific proposals to the WSSD.

Opening Statements: Kim Hak-Su highlighted five priority areas for sustainable development: rejection of poverty as an acceptable human condition; maximization of benefits and minimization of adverse effects of globalization; conservation of biodiversity and management of natural resources; improvement of governance and public participation; and provision of financial resources.

Hama Arba Diallo, Executive Secretary, UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), said progress in sustainable development had been constrained by factors such as the economic slowdown. He elaborated on progress in UNCCD implementation, noting the Asia-Pacific region's achievements and implementation constraints, and the relation between the UNCCD and Kitakyushu deliberations on land degradation.

Reporting on the previous day's proceedings, Roundtable Chair Cielito Habito highlighted concerns raised and proposals made on the draft Platform, as well as deliberations of the panel discussion on financing sustainable development.

Country Statements: The Republic of Korea suggested priority areas for sustainable development activities, *inter alia*, addressing transboundary air pollution issues and desertification and promoting the use of information and communication technology. Iran detailed his country's sustainable development achievements and noted the need to address the root causes of poverty, including wars and armed conflict that also lead to environment degradation.

China outlined progress made in, and positive results arising from, its Agenda 21 implementation, acknowledged poverty and inequity as key challenges, and said unfulfilled international commitments undermined the attainment of sustainable development. Indonesia outlined global factors hindering sustainable development and proposed, *inter alia*, enriching the Earth Charter as the basis for sustainable development and equipping implementing agents with appropriate analytical skills.

Bangladesh noted that LDCs are most vulnerable to the negative impacts of globalization, described environment issues of national concern such as health hazards from arsenic poisoning of groundwater, and proposed the establishment of a disaster management center and a regional ecological information center. On globalization, the Russian



Federation said existing imbalances should be addressed, noted international trade as a source of support for sustainable development, and urged the expansion of WTO membership.

Samoa reported slow and varied progress in its Agenda 21 implementation, outlined major achievements, and said its view of the WSSD's main goal for the next decade was the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Barbados Plan of Action for Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Stressing its membership in the Pacific Rim region, the US outlined the key elements for realization of sustainable development and underscored the role of major groups and sound institutional and enabling environments to facilitate private and public resource flows. Pointing out that the Asia-Pacific region is the largest and fastest-growing, Myanmar emphasized strengthening intra-regional cooperation in experience sharing and technology transfer, and identified land degradation and food security as the main regional issues.

Malaysia noted that intellectual property regimes had raised technology transfer costs, stressed that the increase of speculative and short-term financial flows has introduced more instability into the global financial system, and maintained that domestic resource mobilization did not fill regional resource gaps. Thailand identified challenges in Agenda 21 implementation, emphasized poverty reduction and job creation at the grassroots level, and called for the establishment of a compensation mechanism for damages to the environment and to quality of life.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea noted that the region had not made remarkable achievements despite regional action plans and meetings and that poverty was prevalent, as were natural disasters caused by climate change. Japan called for: the use of science and technology to reduce environmental impacts and manage natural disasters; full implementation of the Kitakyushu Declaration and the Kyoto Protocol; South-South cooperation; addressing forest crimes; and development of trade rules for sustainable utilization.

The Philippines reiterated Maurice Strong's words that "the battle of sustainable development will be won or lost in Asia," endorsed trade and investment flows that improve the quality of life of the poor, and warned that in the absence of consensus at the WSSD, delegates may meet again at Rio+20 or Rio+30, without discernable changes from 1992. Brunei Darussalam noted that the region's economic crisis diverted needed resources for environmental protection to other sectors, described growing problems of waste management and hazardous and non-hazardous wastes, and implored delegates to work together in good faith and partnership to meet sustainable development goals. Recalling that the Asia-Pacific region accounts for more than half of the world's population, India emphasized appropriate pricing for fuels and proper valuation of natural resources, cost-effective technologies related to recycling and waste minimization, and the North's ecological debt. Kyrgyzstan emphasized the vulnerable and unstable nature of mountainous habitats, manifested in natural disasters such as floods and mudslides, called for debt-for-nature swaps in the region, and suggested that one factor feeding terrorism networks is the failure to implement concepts from the Rio conference.

Bhutan noted that the subregional meetings demonstrate that Rio commitments remain unfulfilled, said that the level of regional poverty is alarming, and endorsed the concept of "gross national happiness."

Armenia, noting that 2003 is the UN Year of Freshwater, urged the development of a regional strategy addressing transboundary waterways. Vietnam called for closer collaboration between developed and developing countries and for a monitoring mechanism to track Agenda 21 implementation. Nepal described commitments to, *inter alia*, transboundary regional conservation and experimental reserves, urged clean technology development to minimize greenhouse gas emissions and transboundary air pollution, and, with Kyrgyzstan and Bhutan, reminded participants that 2002 is the UN Year of the Mountain.

Pakistan described country-level summit preparations and accomplishments to date, *inter alia*, the establishment of a high-level multi-stakeholder committee and the holding of a children's poster competition. With Nepal, he supported the establishment of a regional disaster management center. Sri Lanka highlighted the recent Montreal Protocol meeting that produced the Colombo Declaration. He identified Sri Lanka's priority themes for the WSSD, namely, eradicating poverty, combating terrorism, conserving natural resources, and building macroeconomic strategies.

Azerbaijan drew attention to the social, environmental, and economic consequences of armed conflicts in his country, which has over one million refugees, and called for poverty reduction, food security, and regional infrastructure development that minimizes environmental impacts. The Marshall Islands cogitated whether the WSSD will produce another blueprint for failure; stressed economic, social and cultural dimensions of sustainable development; and expressed concern over the adverse effects of sea level rise from global warming.

Statements from UN Agencies, International Organizations and Civil Society: The World Health Organization described initiatives to integrate health and environmental concerns into national sustainable development planning, and, with Bangladesh, expressed concern about arsenic in groundwater in the region. The United Nations University highlighted its role in providing a forum for informal dialogue among UN member States and key stakeholders, and described the "Interlinkages" research initiative and work on urban centers.

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) said that new responsibilities and funding for the GEF provided expanded opportunities in the region, highlighting work on integrated ecosystem management, and expressed hope that the GEF would catalyze partnerships among, *inter alia*, governments, NGOs, the private sector and indigenous peoples. The Asia-Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development stated that research findings indicated that women endure the worst effects from industrial logging, commercial fishing, intensive use of pesticides in agriculture, toxic waste dumping and nuclear testing. The Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women noted that integration of gender equality is considered by this region as a separate, cross-cutting issue, and emphasized that sustainable development issues affect women differently.

Third World Network urged renewed internationalism on financing for development, and called for: the untying of aid; donor coordination and accountability; responsible lending by financing institutions; and the continued provision of basic services to citizens by governments.

The UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) discussed sustainable development connections to the multilateral trade system. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations called for an integrated, cross-sectoral approach and greater Asia involvement in regional GEF



projects, mentioned constraints in capacity, financial resources and technology transfer, and identified transboundary haze as a main pollution issue.

INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS: At 4:00 pm on Tuesday, 27 November, Chair Kiyotaka Akasaka (Japan) opened the informal consultations, and invited general comments on the draft Platform. Countries highlighted issues including: decreasing ODA; the unwelcome entry of the WTO into the environment policy arena; and the need for proper technology transfer mechanisms. Countries emphasized the need for specific, concrete recommendations in a more concise Platform. Several countries objected to reference to a new regional environment facility, stressing the need to strengthen existing ones. Consultations continued late into the night Tuesday and through the night Wednesday, concluding at 8:40 am, Thursday morning.

Introductory Paragraphs: Proposed references to the Barbados Declaration and the regional significance of exclusive economic zones and migratory fish stocks were adopted.

Regional Assessment of the Implementation of Agenda 21: It was agreed to retain this section's title due to a CSD requirement for a regional assessment of Agenda 21 implementation. There was discussion of whether to delete or amend a reference to inadequate financial resources as some delegates argued that it was not the only, or most severe, constraint to sustainable development. Delegates accepted a new proposal recognizing the growing isolation and vulnerability of SIDS as a factor exacerbating these constraints and, upon rejection of a proposal on constraints associated with foreign aggression, the proposer said his country's position should be recorded.

Key Issues and Priorities for Sustainable Development: Delegates debated text taken from the UN Millennium Declaration referring to environment protection, good governance and human development. Delegates quickly accepted a proposal to add reference to public participation, but engaged in protracted debate regarding the term "good governance." On references to environmental stewardship, concerns about the implications for conservation led to extensive deliberations on the choice of terminology, with delegates proposing environment protection, management and stewardship.

Environment and Natural Resources Issues: Delegates agreed to present the section on economic and social issues before that on environment and natural resources issues, and adopted new paragraphs on energy and mineral resources and on island vulnerability. On land and biodiversity, new proposals on forests, a reference to coral reefs and atolls, and text on the need to mobilize financial mechanisms, technology transfer and capacity building were deferred to informal consultations, and later were accepted.

On the region's oceans and marine environment, text was amended to describe threats to the integrity of coasts and oceans from unsustainable development and overexploitation. There was also agreement to: add "oil piping" and marine accidents as causes of environmental degradation; recognize subregional cooperation; emphasize sustainable management of oceans; and not specify conventions.

Most discussion on freshwater resources revolved around a proposal on the severity of arsenic contamination to groundwater. Other concerns related to the availability of freshwater in low-lying SIDS and the need for integrated river and basin management. On

atmosphere and climate change, delegates accepted references to: sandstorm phenomena and "yellow dust caused by desertification"; sea level rise; and urban air and megacities. In an extensive debate, several delegations expressed concern about text regarding consistency with, and entry into force of, the Kyoto Protocol.

Economic and Social Issues: Extensive discussion on the topic of globalization resulted in adoption of additional text referencing the need for full integration, especially of LDCs and countries with economies in transition, into the world economic and trade system, the need for a level playing field between developing and developed countries, and recognizing that LDCs are particularly vulnerable to the negative impacts of globalization.

On sustainable energy development, delegates accepted references to "affordable" clean energy and to increasing cost-effectiveness and efficiency of energy production and consumption, approved a new paragraph on sustainable agriculture and food security, and deleted text on provisions for refining energy-environment policies.

On human settlements development, references were added to emphasize: qualitative health aspects; the rural-urban link; similarity of urban problems in SIDS and other regions; and measures to address noted problems.

Delegates debated whether to delete text referring to reduction of the consumption patterns of developed countries of the world and the rich sections of the population of developing countries. Several countries insisted on maintaining specific reference to developed countries and to meeting the basic needs of the global population. Delegates agreed to a new paragraph on achieving an energy-efficient and recycling-based society.

During discussion of human development, references were added regarding infectious diseases and the need to address the inadequacy of rural infrastructure and facilities to enhance employment opportunities. After extended discussion, text was approved based on the African Ministerial Statement recognizing that peace, security and stability are prerequisites for sustainable development in all countries and regions of the world, as well as text stating that lack of peace, security and stability impedes the implementation of sustainable development strategies at the national and regional levels.

Regarding coping with natural disasters, delegates agreed to text from the Millennium Declaration on environmental degradation and other relevant humanitarian emergencies, as well as proposals regarding: establishment of comprehensive hazard and risk management plans; displacement of poor communities; and improved disaster mitigation and preparedness capabilities. Extensive debate took place on text referring to the effects of climate change, environmental degradation and natural disasters. Delegates agreed to a new paragraph on energy and mineral resources.

Cross-cutting Issues: On policy challenges for sustainable development, delegates accepted new text on inclusion of an ecosystem-based approach and respect for traditional resources management, and agreed to delete reference to devolution "of power." Regarding technology transfer, concerns raised and accepted refer to the need to emphasize that commitment to environmentally sound technology transfer has been largely unfulfilled and is urgently needed. References to commercialization of technology were removed. On promoting



participation of and partnership with major groups, references were discussed and accepted regarding: the need for civil society to deliver social services in partnership with government, and the mobilization of women for economic and social development.

New gender equality and justice text was proposed and adopted emphasizing the importance of empowering women in social and economic development by reinforcing their capacity in terms of education, employment, and provision of women's health services, including access to family planning and other basic services and training.

Follow-Up Actions: Goals and Targets: Extensive discussion focused on defining indicators of sustainable development, with a proposed reference to environmental quality, social welfare and security as indicators deferred to informal-informal discussion. Text supporting indicators of sustainable development in all countries, especially developing countries and countries with economies in transition, was agreed upon.

Asia-Pacific Initiatives: Delegates agreed to add a reference to development of scientific infrastructure within the region to help achieve sustainable development goals.

Regarding capacity building, delegates agreed to delete reference to conflict resolution and add text on strengthening subregional institutions that promote environmental management and sustainable development, and on the promotion and use of traditional knowledge and practices and local and modern technologies.

In the section on cleaner production and sustainable energy, delegates agreed to delete a reference to intellectual property protection. References to land management and biodiversity conservation were added. Delegates removed text on the agriculture-environment nexus and deleted references to criteria and indicators and to import and export of illegally harvested timber. Regarding protection and management of and access to freshwater resources, reference to the Central Asian initiative on freshwater resources was accepted.

Delegates agreed to text modifications referring to marine ecosystems, waste management systems to prevent and control land- and sea-based pollution, and coastal resources. There was little contention over a new proposal calling for the early development of measures to address island vulnerability and for the further implementation of the Barbados Plan of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS. A proposed new section on atmosphere and climate change was accepted, addressing initiatives to curb urban air pollution and increase international and domestic action consistent with UNFCCC decisions and the Kyoto Protocol.

Implementation Mechanisms: A statement was removed from the preambular paragraph stressing that new production strategies and consumption patterns should empower the poor to move from informal to formal markets. On national level mechanisms, language suggesting the need for reforms was deleted, and the link between administrative frameworks and cultural circumstances was clarified. Proposals were agreed on the institutionalization of multi-stakeholder participation and on participatory development of indicator systems and targets for monitoring sustainable development.

The section on implementation mechanisms at the regional/subregional levels was revised substantively due to repetition and a lack of

clarity regarding who would finance or create a strengthened intergovernmental mechanism, *inter alia*, for Agenda 21 implementation. Following protracted debate on global level implementation mechanisms, this section was revised considerably with regard to the ODA target of 0.7% of GNP, trade and investment regimes, and trade barriers faced by developing countries. Revisions highlight good governance at the international level and nondiscriminatory multilateral systems, better utilization of MEAs and their institutions, improvement by the WTO of market access for developing country exports, and the future role of the CSD.

Financing Sustainable Development: This section was the subject of extensive discussions. References to the anticipated regional annual US\$30 billion financing gap to achieve sustainable development and to new regional financing mechanisms were deleted. After informal-informal negotiations, text was agreed highlighting the importance of mobilizing all resources, especially domestic, for financing sustainable development, yet realizing that developing countries, particularly countries with economies in transition and SIDS, will continue to need international financial assistance. The text also refers to the International Conference on Financing for Development to be held in Mexico in March 2002, access to export markets and financial flows, and efforts to reach the UN ODA target of 0.7% of GNP, as well as on the transfer of environmentally sound technologies. Reference to the provision of new and additional financial resources was deleted. A new paragraph on the GEF was added, referencing its role, the current performance appraisal, strengthening within its mandate, improvement of operational procedures and project implementation, and its geographical coverage.

Final Statements: Delegates disagreed on whether or not to add a concluding paragraph summarizing the main points of the Platform. After discussion, a brief statement was adopted urging the WSSD to accord priority attention at the global level to the issues and initiatives raised in the Platform.

CLOSING SESSION

Chair Mok Mareth opened the afternoon session, which began with a presentation by Indonesia detailing logistics of PrepCom IV to be held in Jakarta from 27 May – 7 June 2002. South Africa gave a presentation on preparations for the Johannesburg Summit, describing the three sites for the meetings of government, civil society, and the business community, and detailing security measures being taken.

Indonesia, as rapporteur, presented and described the Report of the High-Level Regional Meeting for the WSSD. Chair Mareth presented the Phnom Penh Regional Platform on Sustainable Development for Asia and the Pacific (ENR/HRM/WSSD/1/Rev.1) for adoption, noting that it had been extensively discussed. The Platform was adopted as proposed.

Chair Mareth shared his Chairman's Summary of the meeting, itemizing the main emergent points, *inter alia*, the diversity in composition of and issues facing the region, and the need for stakeholder involvement in the decision-making process.

Consideration and Adoption of the Report: The Chair presented the Report of the High-Level Regional Meeting (ENR/HRM/WSSD/Rep.) for comment. After a brief discussion and minor modifications, the Report was adopted.



In his closing statement, ESCAP Executive Secretary Kim Hak-Su expressed his pleasure with the meeting's successful decisions and noted that the regional message and programme adopted at Kitakyushu provide a roadmap for sustainable development for the next decade, urging the development of concrete programmes for funding and implementation.

In his closing remarks, Chair Mareth expressed his gratitude to the Royal Government of Cambodia and the meeting organizers and thanked participants for their excellent input, valuable comments and suggestions, adding that he was confident that the meeting's dialogue would be helpful to the WSSD. The meeting was gavelled to a close ahead of schedule at 4:20 pm.

PHNOM PENH REGIONAL PLATFORM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

The "Phnom Penh Regional Platform on Sustainable Development for Asia and the Pacific" (ENR/HRM/WSSD/1/Rev.1) is organized into five sections: regional assessment of the implementation of Agenda 21; key regional issues and priorities for sustainable development, which is sub-divided into economic and social issues, environmental and natural resources issues and cross-cutting issues; follow-up actions, which is sub-divided into goals and targets, Asia-Pacific initiatives, and implementation mechanisms; financing sustainable development; and final statements.

Regional Assessment of the Implementation of Agenda 21: The section notes that, despite significant sustainable development accomplishments, the region's environment continues to deteriorate and the number of poor continues to increase. It highlights sustainable development challenges including widespread poverty, inadequate financial resources, and isolation and vulnerability of SIDS.

Key Regional Issues and Priorities for Sustainable Development: The chapeau recognizes that addressing key issues requires promoting: economic growth and social development, making globalization a positive force with particular emphasis on poverty eradication; environmental protection and management; good governance, as described in paragraph 13 of the Millennium Declaration; public participation; and human development.

Economic and Social Issues: On chronic and persistent poverty, the Platform identifies poverty reduction and sustainable economic growth as essential elements of sustainable development, requiring the combined efforts of governments and civil society, as well as strong and sustained support from the international community.

On globalization, the Platform recognizes both positive and negative impacts on sustainable development such as increasing foreign investment and the trade-related loss of natural resources. The Platform urges full integration of developing countries and economies in transition into the world economic and trade system, and recognizes the vulnerability of LDCs to the negative impacts. The Platform calls for, *inter alia*, technical assistance to LDCs and reduced restrictions on product access in the global market.

On sustainable energy development, the Platform recognizes that energy is vital to economic development, and identifies critical issues including:

- indoor and urban air pollution from fossil fuel burning and urban transport;

- availability and accessibility of energy to the poor;
- development of renewable energy;
- the need for increased cost-effectiveness and efficiency of energy production and consumption; and
- development and use of affordable clean energy technologies.

In a new paragraph, the Platform notes the need for sustainable agriculture and rural development for food security while reducing trade distortions. The Platform: identifies challenges to human settlements development and management, such as the provision of basic infrastructure; describes conditions in megacities; and calls for the promotion of the Kitakyushu Initiative for a Clean Environment. On unsustainable consumption and production patterns, the Platform: highlights inefficiencies and mismanagement in the use of water, energy and minerals; and calls for promotion of less resource-intensive patterns of consumption and achievement of an energy-efficient, recycling-based society

Human development is identified as the biggest social challenge for the region. The Platform calls for urgent measures to address, *inter alia*, illiteracy, malnutrition, poor health, human deprivation and infectious disease. It also emphasizes the importance of environmental education and dialogue among civilizations.

The Platform calls for measures to ensure that populations suffering from the consequences of natural disasters, severe environmental degradation and other relevant humanitarian emergencies are given assistance and protection.

Environmental and Natural Resources Issues: The Platform notes the threat to biodiversity from habitat alteration, the introduction of exotic species, pollution, global warming and other human activities. It stresses the implementation of the CBD and UNCCD, and the promotion of sustainable forest management. Regarding oceans and coastal resources, the Platform identifies threats such as: hazardous and toxic wastes discharge; land-based sources of pollution; destruction of corals and mangroves; offshore oil-piping and mineral exploration and exploitation; oil spills; marine accidents; excessive coastal tourism; and overfishing. It calls for increased cooperation among institutions at all levels, implementation of related international treaties, and promotion of total ecosystem marine resources management.

On freshwater resources, the Platform identifies factors contributing to water scarcity, stresses that arsenic contamination is a severe problem, and calls for integrated river and basin management. In a new paragraph, the Platform recognizes energy and mineral resources as crucial to sustainable development, and states that access to energy resources for the poor is instrumental to poverty alleviation.

On atmosphere and climate change, the Platform identifies concerns including: deteriorating quality of urban air; transboundary air pollution; the sandstorm phenomena; climate change and variability; and extreme events such as storms, floods, drought and sea-level rise. It calls for, *inter alia*, increased action in addressing adaptation to climate change, and notes the decision by the seventh session of the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties. In a new paragraph on island vulnerability, the Platform notes factors such as remoteness, geographical dispersion, natural disasters, climate change, ecological frailty, exposure to economic shocks, small internal markets and limited resources endowment.



Cross-cutting Issues: The Platform emphasizes sustainable development policies based on principles including economic sustainability, poverty alleviation and human development, environmental stewardship, respect for effective traditional resources management, and institutional safeguards. On institutional reform and governance, the Platform describes key issues at national, subregional, regional and global levels, and emphasizes the need to improve interlinkages and enhanced cooperation and synergies among MEAs.

On capacity building, the Platform emphasizes: better education and training; self-empowerment of local communities; the use of space and information and communication technologies; and promotion of traditional skills and knowledge.

Regarding enabling informed decision-making, the Platform recognizes the need for regionally-developed scientific infrastructures and the need to establish an accurate database and integrated information systems.

The Platform stresses the transfer of environmentally sound technologies through improved mechanisms including the WTO process, better access to information, and enhanced capacities of recipient countries to use these technologies. It also notes the need to promote: local technology development; capacity for technology assessment; private sector participation in research and development; and larger national allocations for science and technology. On promoting participation of and partnership with major groups, the Platform suggests development of partnerships with business and industry and the science and technology communities in finding solutions to various environmental, social and economic challenges, and that these groups should be major partners in extending environmental services to the poor. On ensuring gender equality and gender justice, the Platform stresses empowering women in social and economic development by reinforcing their capacity in education, employment, and women's health services.

Follow-up actions: Goals and Targets: The Platform notes agreement to contribute toward achieving the agreed international development goals and targets set by the UN Millennium Declaration.

Asia-Pacific Initiatives: The Platform reiterates commitment to full implementation of the Kitakyushu Regional Action Programme for Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development and its Initiative for a Clean Environment.

On capacity building for sustainable development, the Platform states that initiatives may include:

- promoting awareness of sustainable development;
- strengthening networks of civil society organizations;
- developing expertise and skills in integrating sustainable development principles into planning, implementation and assessment;
- building capacity in MEAs and international organizations; and
- enhancing capability for coping with natural disasters and globalization.

On poverty reduction, the Platform states that implementation of initiatives may demand sustainable economic growth, inclusive social development, effective policies and institutions, and increased investment in physical and social infrastructure.

The Platform states that development and early implementation of an initiative on cleaner production and sustainable energy may

comprise: capacity building; education and training on renewable and energy efficient technologies; database management and information dissemination; and technology transfer activities.

The Platform supports: development and early implementation of an initiative on land management and biodiversity conservation, including combating desertification and land degradation; rehabilitation of degraded areas; and the development and early implementation of an initiative to promote sustainable forest management. On protection and management of and access to freshwater resources, the Platform, *inter alia*, expresses support for development and early implementation of an initiative that will aim to:

- promote a national focus on fostering the integrated management of water resources and basins;
- improve and expand delivery of services;
- foster the conservation of water and increase system efficiency; and
- facilitate the exchange of water sector information and experience.

The Platform supports development and early implementation of an initiative on oceans, coastal and marine resources and sustainable development of SIDS, as well as development and implementation of measures to address island vulnerability. The Platform supports concrete initiatives, addressing urban air and transboundary air pollution and sandstorms.

Implementation Mechanisms: The chapeau describes the requirements for effective implementation, the objective of implementation mechanisms and benefits of alleviating poverty. Regarding national implementation mechanisms, the Platform stresses the role of governments, education and healthcare systems, decentralization of power, and indicator systems and targets for monitoring sustainable development.

On regional/subregional implementation mechanisms, the Platform recognizes the importance of ESCAP in implementation, coordination and monitoring of Agenda 21 implementation, and stipulates that initiatives should be developed in cooperation with donor countries and relevant regional and international organizations.

On global implementation mechanisms, the Platform states that Agenda 21 cannot be successfully implemented unless the global commitments made at UNCED are fulfilled and the Rio principle of common but differentiated responsibilities is followed in its letter and spirit. It also stresses:

- better utilization of MEAs;
- improved efforts toward reaching ODA targets;
- enhanced capacity for effective debt management;
- good governance at the international level; and
- elimination of trade barriers in order to improve market access for developing countries.

Financing Sustainable Development: This section:

- recognizes the importance of mobilizing all available resources for financing sustainable development;
- identifies better access to export markets and private financial flows as important in generating resources; and
- urges developed countries to strive to reach the accepted UN ODA target of 0.7% of their GNP as soon as possible.



It also welcomes the current performance appraisal of the GEF and notes civil society as an important partner in improving environmental management and accountability.

Final Statements: The Platform:

- calls upon the WSSD to accord priority attention at the global level to the issues and initiatives mentioned;
- submits the Phnom Penh Platform on Sustainable Development for Asia and the Pacific, together with the Kitakyushu Regional Message to the 10-Year Review of UNCED and Regional Action Programme, to the WSSD;
- requests support and cooperation from the international community;
- affirms the region's commitment to full and active participation in the WSSD and its preparatory process; and
- calls for all countries to participate in the Summit at the highest level.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE MEETING

A CRYSTAL BALL FOR PREPCOM II AND THE SUMMIT

The thunderous applause that greeted the adoption of the Phnom Penh Platform on Sustainable Development for Asia and the Pacific bore testimony to participants' relief at the successful conclusion of the three-day meeting. Exhausted delegates, desperate for a substantive, "punchy" product, braved 48 hours of negotiations with little rest in between to produce what many described as perhaps the best of the products to come out of the five regional preparatory meetings for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). The Asia-Pacific region, considered the most diverse socially, economically, culturally and environmentally, accounts for over half the world's population, and encompasses a significant number of developed and developing countries, and is therefore considered a snapshot of the global community. Thus, the outcome of this regional meeting in many ways may foreshadow the upcoming PrepComs and Summit.

The Stakeholders' Roundtable and Ministerial Statements, along with the informal consultations on the Platform, comprised the three primary parts of the meeting. Although touted by several delegates as the most successful of the regional meetings, many participants were still critical about the achievements realized, noting that the meetings' greatest value was in the lessons to be drawn for future planning of bottom-up processes, and to enhance activities prior to the second preparatory committee meeting for the WSSD (PrepCom II). This analysis provides a review of the regional preparatory process and its outputs, and a stock-taking as we stand at the threshold of PrepCom II.

ASSESSING PRODUCT

The two products of the Asia-Pacific meeting were the Regional Platform, finalized through marathon informal consultations, and the Chairman's Summary of the Roundtable Meeting. Arguably comprehensive, action-oriented, and considered by many participants to be well-integrated, the Platform was deemed to approximate the kind of substance needed for the effective preparation for PrepCom II, scheduled for late January 2002. Participants commended the Platform as being balanced in terms of social, economic and environmental issues, reflecting concerns of small islands as well as those of other States, being supportive of institutionalization of stakeholder involvement,

and in identifying not only sectoral, but also cross-sectoral, issues. Also, unlike the outcomes of the other regional meetings, the Asia-Pacific Platform proposes key *action* areas.

Despite many positive reactions, there were those who felt that the Platform fell short of expectations. Some delegates pointed out a lack of coherence between the issues, goals and proposed actions, with a major criticism being that the Platform's goals are "the Millennium Declaration made Asian!" The Platform generally lacks innovative proposals, and its assessment of Agenda 21 implementation is rhetorical, without a critical evaluation of the causes of failure to implement Agenda 21. Unlike other regional outputs, some observers commented that the Platform offers little guidance for the Summit. Many participants decried the "New York style of negotiating words and commas," which they blamed for the Platform's bulkiness.

The Chairman's Summary of the Stakeholders' Meeting was praised as comprehensive and a fair reflection of the Roundtable proceedings, but was of little use to the Platform preparation, since it was only available to delegates after they had already wrapped up consultations. The Ministerial Statements were considered minimally useful, being nationally-focused and historically-oriented presentations offering little in the way of political guidance, Platform input, or attention to the WSSD process.

Given the expectation that this diverse region should provide strong leadership for the Summit, the shortcomings of the Platform and regional process indicate the challenges ahead in New York, Jakarta and Johannesburg.

MEASURING PROCESS

The relative quality of the meeting's outputs in relation to other regions was largely attributed to the level of preparation and organization of the Regional Task Force (ESCAP, UNDP, UNEP, ADB), bearing testimony to the fact that the secret to a good product is in the process. Praises were given for: clarity on expectations for the meeting and participation of the various stakeholders; availability of documents; high government attendance; and timing of the Roundtable during the meeting, enabling stakeholders to be present. Prepared in much the same way as the African draft Ministerial Statement, but with more lead time, discussion of the Asia-Pacific Platform in preparation for the meeting was described as initially "stormy," but went relatively smoothly at the meeting. The higher quality of the Platform's content was attributed to the region's strong research capability and resource availability, while the negotiations were less contentious, thanks to advance roundtable meetings, simultaneous subregional stakeholder and intergovernmental meetings, early circulation of the draft documents to the capitals, and at least two formal advance consultations among the region's Advisory Committee of ESCAP Permanent Representatives.

Despite preparatory efforts, participants criticized the inability of the organizers and governments to take advantage of the wealth of human resources at their disposal. Observers commended the analytical input and innovative proposals from NGOs, however, a limited amount actually found its way into the Platform. Although back-to-back stakeholder/government sessions promote interaction, they do not allow adequate time for integration of proposals. Comprised mostly of NGOs, the Roundtable was criticized as not really being



“multi-stakeholder,” with a notable dearth of representatives from labor organizations, indigenous peoples, and the private sector. The lack of national preparatory processes to inform the subregional meetings, the preparation of a draft Platform in advance of the subregional consultations and the introduction of new proposals during informal consultations that had not been endorsed at the subregional meetings undermined the much-heralded bottom-up approach.

Nevertheless, the Asia-Pacific regional preparations, as in other regions, have proven their value as catalysts to build capacity and awareness of the Summit, to stimulate regional WSSD activities and enable governments to “get their act together,” and to enable NGOs to make substantive input into the process, especially through subregional meetings.

WILL THERE BE ANY UNITY IN DIVERSITY?

The conclusion of the Asia-Pacific Meeting marks the end of regional preparations for the Summit, and provides an opportune moment to examine where we stand on the threshold of PrepCom II.

The identification of key themes for the Summit was a primary objective of the regional meetings. In this regard, they have delivered. The emerging cross-cutting themes are poverty, globalization, governance, education, capacity building, financing sustainable development and technology transfer. Sectoral themes include freshwater, human settlements, energy, natural resource use and conservation, and health, environment and sustainable development. Institutional themes include implementation and mechanisms to monitor and evaluate implementation progress. The principles of integration at the sectoral, governance and stakeholder levels are also advocated.

While ample material exists for addressing the thematic aspect in the preparation of the UN Secretary-General’s report, which will be presented at PrepCom II, the value of the regional reviews in the preparation of forward-looking proposals is questionable. From these regional outputs, the PrepCom Chair is required to prepare an assessment of Agenda 21 implementation that is concrete and action-oriented, proposes time-bound measures to be undertaken, contains institutional and financial requirements, and identifies sources of such support. This proposal will be considered at PrepCom II and will provide the elements for consideration at future PrepComs. However, the regional outputs provide little concrete guidance on aspects such as the preferred UN targets that should be met on the issues raised. The preparation of the Chair’s assessment will therefore constitute the most important challenge of the PrepCom.

Regional consultations facilitated the bottom-up approach to define the WSSD agenda. Some charged that it had failed to deliver, since: many of the subregional processes preceded national ones; stakeholder participation, even as observers, was restricted in all the regional negotiations, deviating from standard CSD practice; and regional negotiations seemed to largely disregard the subregional and eminent persons’ roundtables. The shortcomings were also largely attributed to time and resource constraints, as well as flaws in designing mechanisms for meaningful stakeholder participation. Despite these failures, the attempt at a bottom-up approach was praised as a positive development in a multilateral system whose governance is under scrutiny.

THE CHALLENGES AHEAD

There are eight weeks left before PrepCom II and a cornucopia of remaining challenges. Although the preparation of documents for PrepCom II is already underway and is likely to be concluded for timely dissemination, there is near unanimity that PrepCom II’s substantive work in preparing the Chair’s assessment of global Agenda 21 implementation may have to begin from scratch. Although each region has defined its priority themes and issues, many countries – much less regions – have not completed their national assessments as required to inform the Chair’s assessment, and possible actions, how to involve multi-stakeholders, and desired outcomes from the Summit remain vague.

With only 10 months left until the Summit, several factors are beginning to cast doubt about the potential for a successful conference and raise the question of rescheduling. These include the significant amount of pending work, the discernable lack of commitment to the process, as evidenced from the hesitancy to shore up sufficient political support at the highest levels, the financial resource deficiency, the apparent lack of “energy” in the civil society sector compared to the same pre-Rio stage, and the diversion of the international community’s attention to the war on terrorism. While optimists claim it is still too early to determine the potential for success or failure, there is agreement that a focused, aggressive strategy for the realization of a successful Summit is indispensable and urgently required. In addition to the many steps in the preparatory process, there is an enormous need to: target the media at all levels; initiate proactive inter-ministerial activity; mobilize economic and planning ministers to attend PrepCom IV; develop, nourish and sustain a “catchy” Summit vision; and engage strategic Heads of State and Government to marshal political support at their own level for the Summit. As we head towards Johannesburg, a commitment to innovation and innovation in commitments is essential.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR BEFORE THE WSSD THE GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON OCEANS AND COASTS AT RIO+10: ASSESSING PROGRESS, ADDRESSING CONTINUING AND NEW CHALLENGES:

The meeting will be held in Paris, France, from 3-7 December 2001. The conference is intended to provide an overall assessment of progress achieved on oceans and coasts since UNCED. Topics include: the implementation of conventions, sustainable development, pollution, resource use and conservation, and climate change. For more information, contact: Patricio Bernal; tel: +331-45-683938; fax: +331-45-685810; e-mail: p.bernal@unesco.org; Internet: <http://www.udel.edu/CMS/csmp/rio+10/>

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; fax: +49-228-28046-60; e-mail: info@water-2001.de; Internet: <http://www.water-2001.de>



CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF ECOTOURISM IN SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES AND OTHER SMALL ISLANDS:

This conference will be held from 8-10 December 2001, in Mahé, Seychelles. It will address issues such as ecotourism planning, marketing and promotion, and environmental, socio-cultural and economic sustainability of ecotourism. For more information, contact: Terry Jones, Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation, Seychelles; tel: +248-611100; fax: 248-224035; e-mail: icmtca@seychelles.net; Internet: <http://www.sidsnet.org>

ALLIANCE OF SMALL ISLAND STATES (AOSIS) INTER-REGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETING FOR WSSD:

The AOSIS inter-regional preparatory meeting for WSSD will take place in Singapore from 14-17 January 2002. For more information, contact: UNDP Capacity 21; tel: +1-212-906-6121; fax: +1-212-906-5896; e-mail: marie-michele.arthur@undp.org; Internet: <http://www.undp.org/capacity21/SIDS/wssd.html>

INFORMAL BRAINSTORMING SESSION ON WSSD: This consultation between the WSSD Bureau and government representatives will be held from 16-17 January 2002, at UN headquarters in New York, and draw on the main thematic outcomes from the regional meetings in preparation for WSSD PrepCom II. For more information, contact Andrey Vasilyev, DESA; tel: +1-212-963-5949; fax: +1-212-963-4260; e-mail: vasilyev@un.org; Internet: <http://www.johannesburgsummit.org/>

WSSD PREPCOM II: 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 (see above)

7TH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE UNEP GOVERNING COUNCIL/GLOBAL MINISTERIAL ENVIRONMENT

FORUM: This conference will take place from 13-15 February 2002, in Cartagena, Colombia. For more information, contact: Secretary for Governing Council; tel: +254-2-623431; fax: +254-2-623929; e-mail: beverly.miller@unep.org; Internet: http://www.unep.org/governing-bodies/gc/specialsessions/gcss_vii/

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON WOMEN, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR POVERTY ALLEVIATION:

This conference will be held in Kathmandu, Nepal, from 4-6 March 2002, and will address issues such as environment and natural resources management, women and information technology, and rural/indigenous technology conservation and utilization. For more information, contact: Conference Organizing Secretary; tel: +977-1-262741; fax: +977-1-547713; e-mail: kayodevi@hotmail.com; Internet: <http://www.panasia.org.sg/nepalnet/ronastup.htm>

SECOND SESSION OF THE UN FORUM ON FORESTS:

UNFF-2 will take place in San José, Costa Rica, from 4-15 March 2002. This meeting will include a high-level ministerial segment. For more information, contact: Mia Soderlund, UNFF Secretariat; tel: +1-212-963-3262; fax: +1-212-963 4260; e-mail: unff@un.org; Internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/forests.htm>

HIGH-LEVEL FORESTRY ROUNDTABLE AT THE SECOND SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS FORUM ON FORESTS:

This meeting will be held in San Jose, Costa Rica, on 11 March 2001, during the UNFF-2. Participants are expected to discuss the different forces acting on forests, including sustainable forest management within the context of sustainable development. For more information, contact Kanta Kumari, GEF; tel: +1-202-473-4260; fax: +1-202-522-3240; e-mail: kkumari@worldbank.org; Internet: <http://www.gefweb.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 international trade, finance and development-related organizations. For more information, contact: Harris Gleckman, Financing for Development Coordinating Secretariat; tel: +1-212-963-4690; e-mail: gleckman@un.org or [Federica Pietracci](mailto:Federica.Pietracci@un.org); tel: +1-212-963-8497; e-mail: pietracci@un.org; Internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/ffd>

WSSD PREPCOM III: This meeting will take place at UN headquarters in New York from 25 March to 5 April 2002, and will 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, 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; http://www.unep.org/children_youth/

WSSD PREPCOM IV: This meeting will take place from 27 May to 7 June 2002, in Jakarta, 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).

ENVIROLAW CONFERENCE 2002: This conference will be held from 26-29 August 2002 in Durban, South Africa. It will provide a platform for the international legal community to provide solutions and suggest mechanisms that will interlink international and regional treaties and conventions in order to improve their implementation and enforcement. It will also interact with the WSSD preparatory process. For more information, contact: EnviroLaw Solutions; tel: +27-11-269-7944; fax: +27-11-269-7899; e-mail: info@envirolawsolutions.com; Internet: <http://www.envirolawsolutions.com>

WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:

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