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WSSD PREPCOM III HIGHLIGHTS: MONDAY, 25 MARCH 2002

The third session of the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom III) for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) opened today at UN Headquarters in New York. In a short morning Plenary, delegates heard opening statements, considered organizational matters, and then adjourned for the day to allow the G-77/China time to consult and develop a position on the *Chairman's Paper*.

OPENING PLENARY

PrepCom Chair Emil Salim (Indonesia) opened the Plenary at exactly 10:00 am to a half-empty conference room. He announced that PrepCom III will negotiate elements for decisions contained in the *Chairman's Paper* (A/CONF.199/PC/L.1) and in a discussion paper – *Sustainable Development Governance at the International, Regional and National Levels* – prepared by Bureau Vice-Chairs Ositadinma Aneadu (Nigeria) and Lars-Göran Engfeldt (Sweden).

Chair Salim introduced the Co-Chairs for the Working Groups and described the focus of each Group. Stressing that PrepCom III should not produce drafting suggestions, Chair Salim emphasized concrete actions for achieving specific goals of the sustainable development agenda. He invited international agencies and financial and development institutions to participate in the Working Groups and provide technical expertise to delegations. On good governance, Chair Salim noted that this issue is considered separately from the issue of sustainable development governance and is included in the introduction of the *Chairman's Paper*. Further, its elements, *inter alia*, respect for human rights, participation in decision making and access to information, should apply to all issues addressed. He described partnership initiatives – Type II outcomes – and emphasized that they should not replace political commitments.

Chair Salim then introduced Diane Quarless (Jamaica) and Jan Kára (Czech Republic) as Co-Chairs for a Tuesday, 26 March session on partnership initiatives, and announced that to accommodate smaller delegations, no more than two Working Groups will meet simultaneously throughout PrepCom III.

Having recently attended the International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD) in Monterrey, Mexico, WSSD Secretary-General Nitin Desai briefed delegates on its outcomes and

implications for the WSSD. Noting the success of Monterrey, Desai described the challenges for Johannesburg, stressing the need to agree on concrete actions. He reiterated that partnerships should not diverge from clear, firm, goal-oriented government agreements, and noted that effective partnerships depend on policy frameworks that support them. He explained that partnerships should leverage resources and change the quality of implementation, underscored the need to consider regional and subregional processes in implementing Agenda 21, and referred to the importance of sustainable development governance. Desai also noted that recent processes have reflected an interest of both the North and South in finding common ground and expressed hope that the WSSD process will define a framework for new multilateralism in the sustainable development agenda.

UNEP Executive Director Klaus Töpfer highlighted the outcomes of the meetings of the Intergovernmental Group of Ministers or Their Representatives on International Environmental Governance (IGM/IEG) and of the UNEP Seventh Special Session of the Governing Council/Third Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GMEF-3). He drew attention to the decisions taken on: the approach to chemical management; enhancement of civil society participation in the work of UNEP; implementation of the Global Plan of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities; and on compliance and enforcement of multilateral agreements. He said the GMEF agreed to: address environmental policy issues in relation to poverty, as well as production and consumption patterns; review and promote synergies in environmental agreements; increase UNEP's role in capacity building and technology transfer; strengthen the Environment Management Group; and secure stable financing for UNEP. He said IEG was viewed within the broader context of sustainable development governance. In regard to the UNEP contribution to the WSSD, the GMEF identified a number of priority areas such as health and environment, oceans and water, ecosystem biodiversity and genetic resources, partnerships, capacity building and transfer of technology, and cultural diversity and ethics. He announced that UNEP Governing Council President David Anderson (Canada) would present a comprehensive report on Thursday, 28 March.

Ousmane Moutari, Niger, presented the report of the second meeting of the Panel of Eminent Personalities considering the poverty-environment nexus within the context of the UN Convention

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to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), which was held in Agadez, Niger, from 25-28 February 2002. He presented the contents of the Report, which elaborates on: the challenges of global poverty and sustainable development at WSSD; the UNCCD as a tool for achieving sustainable development and poverty alleviation; an initiative for dryland communities; recommendations to the WSSD; and the Agadez Call. He also emphasized the important role of the Global Environment Facility as a mechanism to finance the UNCCD, local community involvement in soil, water and energy issues, and the need to integrate aspects relating to desertification in World Bank policies and programmes.

Severino Soares Almeida, Cape Verde, drew attention to the *Ministerial Message from Praia*, issued by Ministers and Heads of Delegations of Parties to the UNCCD who met on 7-8 March 2002, in Praia, Cape Verde, in the context of the WSSD preparatory process. He said the meeting was attended by, among others, international organizations and countries affected by drought and desertification.

Venezuela's Permanent Representative to the UN and President of the G-77/China, Milos Alcalay, presented the report of the Third High-Level Forum on Cooperation between Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean in the context of the Inter-regional Cooperation Platform that was held on 19-20 February 2002 in Caracas, Venezuela. He also presented the Caracas Declaration on the Implementation of the UNCCD, which was issued by the Forum. Acknowledging the challenges presented by FfD, he emphasized the need for Johannesburg to define the types of development to be financed.

IRAN, presenting on behalf of UNFF-2 Chair Knut Øistad (Norway), elaborated on the Ministerial Declaration adopted by UNFF-2 and expressed hope that the Declaration and its message will be taken up by the WSSD.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS: Chair Salim proposed, and delegates adopted, the agenda (A/CONF.199/PC/1) and the organization of work (A/CONF.199/PC/1/Add.1). In response to HUNGARY's concern about addressing cross-cutting issues that would be handled in simultaneous Working Groups, Chair Salim explained that Co-Chairs would meet regularly to synchronize the Working Group outcomes.

Delegates accredited the following intergovernmental organizations: Association of Southeast Asian Nations; Comisión Permanente del Pacífico Sur; Common Fund for Commodities; Interstate Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States on Promotion of Knowledge and Adult Education; Sahara and Sahel Observatory; and South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme.

Regarding NGO accreditation, Joanne DiSano, DESA Secretariat, announced that accreditation of the Tibet Justice Center required further consideration and delegates agreed to take it up on Thursday, 28 March. In conclusion, Chair Salim noted that PrepCom III will not have weekend or night meetings and that the afternoon meetings will end promptly at 6:00 pm. INDONESIA formally announced that PrepCom IV will convene in Bali, Indonesia from 27 May – 7 June, and that the Ministerial segment will take place from 5-7 June.

IN THE CORRIDORS

The prompt start and businesslike tone set by PrepCom Chair Emil Salim during the opening Plenary reflected a determined effort not to waste time in the face of the UN Secretariat's latest budgetary restrictions and the short week ahead. While some say that the 10:00 am sharp start may have been a UN first, delegates seemed to have read the mood as many embarked, on the first day, to exchange position papers.

Some participants said Working Group III is facing a perilous time crunch, as it has fewer sessions planned than the other Groups, yet still has to develop text for negotiation. Papers in circulation on sustainable development governance indicated that ideas still need to be digested such as those on universal CSD participation. However, some expressed hope that the ongoing bilateral consultations and the formal discussion scheduled for Tuesday afternoon would provide sufficient material for a revised text that would hopefully come closer to the final product.

Meanwhile, participants indicate that the postponement to Tuesday of the start of the day's Working Group sessions was aimed at enabling the G-77/China delegates who attended a four-day consultation on the *Chairman's Paper* the previous week to reach agreement on a Group position with delegates who had just arrived from Capitals and Monterrey.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

WORKING GROUP I: Working Group I, co-chaired by Kiyotaka Akasaka (Japan) and Maria Viotti (Brazil), will meet in Conference Room 1 at 10:00 am to commence its work on sections I-IV of the *Chairman's Paper* (A/CONF.199/PC/L.1): introduction; poverty eradication; changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production; and protecting and managing the natural resource base for economic and social development.

WORKING GROUP II: Working Group II, co-chaired by Ihab Gamaleldin (Egypt) and Richard Ballhorn (Canada), will meet in Conference Room 4 at 10:00 am to commence consideration of sections V-IX of the *Chairman's Paper* (A/CONF.199/PC/L.1): sustainable development in a globalizing world; health and sustainable development; sustainable development of small island developing States; sustainable development initiatives for Africa; and means of implementation.

WORKING GROUP III: Working Group III, co-chaired by Ositadinma Anaedu (Nigeria) and Lars-Göran Engfeldt (Sweden) will convene at 3:00 pm in Conference Room 1 to commence consideration of sustainable development governance.

PARTNERSHIPS: Informal consultations to exchange views on, but not negotiate, the Type II outcomes – partnership initiatives – will be held in Conference Room 5 starting at 3:00 pm. Diane Quarless (Jamaica) and Jan Kára (Czech Republic) will co-chair the session.

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