

UNCSD INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS: THURSDAY, 3 MAY 2012

On Thursday, delegates continued informal negotiations on the draft outcome document for the UNCSD, working into the night. Working Group 1 focused on Section V (Framework for Action and Follow-Up), while Working Group 2 addressed Section IV (IFSD).

WORKING GROUP 1

SECTION V: FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION AND FOLLOW-UP: The Working Group took up several sub-sections under the section originally entitled, "Priority/key/thematic/cross-sectoral issues and areas."

Water and Sanitation: On general commitments on water (NCST pre67), JAPAN proposed reaffirming the need to develop IWRM and water efficiency plans. The G-77/CHINA sought changing all references to sanitation to "basic sanitation."

On the right to water and sanitation (NCST 67), SWITZERLAND, with the HOLY SEE and NEW ZEALAND, inserted text from UNGA Resolution 64/292 on safe and clean drinking water and sanitation as a human right. CANADA and the US asked to delete the paragraph. The G-77/CHINA proposed deleting "universal" with reference to access. The EU proposed a goal of achieving by 2030 "universal, sustainable and equitable access to safe and clean drinking water and basic sanitation."

On progress towards access (NCST 67 bis), the US and CANADA suggested moving the paragraph to Section V-C. CANADA, with AUSTRALIA and the EU, proposed "mobilizing" rather than "making available" resources. The G-77/CHINA proposed text on adequate and predictable resources. The EU proposed a target on improved and secured status of water quality and water-related ecosystems, significantly reducing water pollution, and significantly increasing wastewater collection and treatment and water reuse.

On the importance of water resources and basic sanitation services and the key role natural ecosystems play in maintaining freshwater (NCST 67 ter), the G-77/CHINA opposed singling out wetlands and forests, which the HOLY SEE, EU and US supported retaining.

On new commitments to, *inter alia*, reduce water pollution and increase water efficiency (NCST 68), the EU, with the G-77/CHINA, SWITZERLAND, REPUBLIC OF KOREA and AUSTRALIA, preferred language on committing to adopt measures. The EU, with CANADA, SWITZERLAND, the US and REPUBLIC OF KOREA, proposed moving language on technology transfer to MOI. The G-77/CHINA proposed language on ensuring technology transfer on preferential terms to developing countries.

The EU proposed a new target on significantly improving water efficiency by 2030, to which SWITZERLAND added reference to transboundary basins.

On the central role of integrated water resource management (IWRM) (NCST 69), the G-77/CHINA proposed deletion. The EU proposed a target on significantly improving implementation of IWRM by 2030.

Energy: On the role of energy in development (NCST pre 70 quat), the EU suggested, but the G-77/CHINA opposed, replacing references to "modern energy services" with "sustainable energy." NEW ZEALAND proposed referencing "sustainable" modern energy services. The US, with NEW ZEALAND, suggested text on supporting efforts toward access to modern energy services.

On an energy mix to meet development needs (NCST pre 70 sext), KAZAKHSTAN, with the RUSSIAN FEDERATION and BELARUS, added language on elaborating long-term projections. NEW ZEALAND, CANADA and SWITZERLAND supported, and the G-77/CHINA and BELARUS opposed, adding "cleaner" energy technologies and deleting reference to cleaner fossil fuel technologies. The EU, supported by NEW ZEALAND and opposed by the G-77/CHINA, proposed an alternative paragraph on national energy policies in accordance with national requirements, taking into account relevant international obligations.

On access to modern energy services (NCST pre 70), the G-77/CHINA proposed deleting the paragraph. CANADA, supported by AUSTRALIA, the US, REPUBLIC OF KOREA, RUSSIAN FEDERATION and others preferred merging with text on affordable energy services (NCST pre 70 quint). The EU, with KAZAKHSTAN, NORWAY and BELARUS, added text on the interdependence between energy, water and food security.

On energy efficiency and increasing the share of renewable energy (NCST pre 70 bis), the G-77/CHINA proposed deletion, noting they preferred linking efficiency to modern and advanced technologies. The EU added text on achieving the objective of limiting global average temperature rise to 2 degrees Celsius compared to preindustrial levels, which BELARUS opposed.

On subsidies (NCST 70 bis), the EU offered a new sentence on ensuring action towards phasing out "environmentally or economically harmful subsidies, including for fossil fuels." NEW ZEALAND, with SWITZERLAND and the US, changed "We recognize the need for, as appropriate, reform" to "We support reform." NORWAY asked to refer to "environmentally harmful and inefficient" subsidies, deleting reference to economically harmful. CANADA, with AUSTRALIA, sought reference to inefficient subsidies. The US sought reference to "fossil fuel subsidies that encourage wasteful consumption." The G-77/CHINA called for deleting the paragraph, and instead addressing separately all subsidies harmful to sustainable development.

On incentives for energy efficiency and diversification (NCST 71 alt1), NEW ZEALAND added language on removing disincentives.

On national efforts (NCST 71), JAPAN, with NEW ZEALAND, added new text underscoring that low-emissions development and low-carbon growth strategies are indispensable to sustainable development. The US supported referencing low-emissions development.

Oceans: In the evening, delegates discussed text on marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction, with VENEZUELA opposing text on a possible implementing agreement to UNCLOS, while SOUTH AFRICA, BRAZIL, INDIA, GUATEMALA, ARGENTINA, CHILE, COSTA RICA and many others supported the zero draft text.

MAJOR GROUPS: The SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL COMMUNITY called for: developing a global facilitating mechanism for, *inter alia*, enhancing international scientific cooperation, and strengthening the science-policy interface. BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY emphasized incentivizing investment and protecting innovation at the global and local levels. CHILDREN AND YOUTH said the “green economy will be our economy,” and reminded delegates of the few remaining negotiating days before Rio.

WORKING GROUP 2

IFSD: Strengthening/Reforming/Integrating the Three Pillars: On text to “enhance the participation and effective involvement of civil society” (NCST 44d), AUSTRALIA and other countries proposed a compromise language for this paragraph that refers to enhancing the participation, effective involvement and contribution of civil society and other relevant stakeholders, as appropriate, and to promoting transparency, broad public participation and partnerships to implement sustainable development.

On enhancing and strengthening the monitoring and review of progress made on implementing commitments against clear objectives (NCST 44e), the G-77/CHINA proposed, and SWITZERLAND and the EU opposed, deletion of “against clear objectives.” The G-77/CHINA also requested consideration of elements previously contained in NCST 44a on, *inter alia*, Agenda 21 and JPOI implementation.

On enhancing and strengthening the monitoring and review of the implementation of all commitments related to SIDS (CST 44e bis), the G-77/CHINA asked to retain all the elements of this paragraph as these represent the Group’s bottom line.

GA, ECOSOC, CSD, SDC Proposal, and UNEP, IFIs and UN Operational Activities at Country Level: On the multilateral system (CST pre 45), the G-77/CHINA preferred referring to a “reformed” rather than “strengthened” system.

On improving IFSD (CST pre 45 ter), JAPAN proposed maintaining reference to “structural, legal and budgetary” implications, while the G-77/CHINA preferred dealing with this text together with resource allocation concerns. The US, supported by SWITZERLAND and the EU, suggested that IFSD take into account “all relevant implications.” Delegates adopted the text *ad referendum*.

On the UNGA (NCST 45), the US proposed a preambular paragraph reaffirming the role and authority of the UNGA on global matters of concern, followed by paragraph 45 reaffirming the UNGA’s central position as the representative organ of the UN.

On ECOSOC as a principal body for policy review, policy dialogue and recommendations (NCST 46), text was agreed *ad referendum*. This paragraph includes reference to: follow-up to the MDGs; supervision of ECOSOC’s subsidiary bodies; promoting the implementation of Agenda 21 by strengthening system-wide coherence and coordination; and overall coordination of funds, programmes and specialized agencies.

The G-77/CHINA presented its position on paragraphs 48 to 51 on the role of ECOSOC, the CSD or SDC, and strengthening or upgrading UNEP as a specialized agency, noting that this position aims to outline the functions of the IFSD framework. She stressed, *inter alia*: the need to continue strengthening ECOSOC as a principal body in follow-up of the outcomes of all major UN Conferences and Summits in the economic, social and related fields; the establishment of a high-level political forum with intergovernmental character, building on existing relevant structures or bodies including the CSD; and the need to launch

a negotiation process under the UNGA to define the form and functions of this forum. She supported giving UNEP’s Governing Council universal membership; keeping UNEP’s headquarters in Nairobi; and strengthening UNEP’s capacities.

On text supporting a regular review of the state of the planet (NCST 52), the US, SWITZERLAND and NEW ZEALAND were generally supportive, while the G-77/CHINA preferred dealing with this in the context of discussions on UNEP. The EU sought to add a review of the Earth’s “carrying capacity.”

On text on multilateral environmental agreements (NCST 55), the G-77/CHINA proposed its deletion. However, NORWAY, SWITZERLAND, JAPAN, the EU, REPUBLIC OF KOREA and KAZAKHSTAN found merit in various parts of the text. Several speakers supported the reference to synergies found among the chemicals and waste treaties.

On further mainstreaming the three dimensions of sustainable development (NCST pre 56), the EU and several others indicated that they could support the text, in the spirit of compromise. The G-77/CHINA reserved its position pending further internal consultation, and suggested some amendments. Several other delegates then proposed edits. Discussions on IFSD continued into the evening.

MAJOR GROUPS: NGOs called for strengthening the CSD, along with ECOSOC and UNEP. She proposed universal membership of the CSD, increased time for meetings, and strengthening its Secretariat, suggesting that it host a high-level forum on sustainability, and act as the venue for implementing SDGs.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES highlighted the need for their full and effective participation, relating this to implementation of Rio Principle 10. She also supported a High Commissioner for Future Generations.

WOMEN called for greater accountability and monitoring of the financial sector, guidelines for ethical investing, mechanisms for gender parity in decision making, and use of gender-disaggregated data.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Incremental progress again appeared to be the order of the day on Thursday, as delegates inched their way through the text. “Let’s put it this way—if this was a race, we’d be the tortoise,” said one participant. Perhaps in recognition of the challenge ahead, the Working Groups seemed to be working with greater urgency on Thursday night.

Some participants were also discussing the various papers and proposals circulated, including the G-77/China’s text on IFSD produced in Working Group II. Delegations generally appeared to welcome the text and some anticipated “constructive” discussions. Meanwhile, delegates participating in Working Group I were more focused on the apparent “discord” within the G-77/China over text relating to UNCLOS.

Some participants were also discussing how much of the action at UN Headquarters has been going on outside the formal plenaries, with numerous “bilaterals” and small group meetings. While such discussions and deal making are a regular feature of such events, it has been even more noticeable at this meeting. “Some key figures have been camped out in the corridors, side rooms and Vienna café throughout the meeting,” noted one civil society observer. “Hopefully, they’ll help pull a rabbit out of the hat on some of the thorniest issues when we get to Rio,” she added.

In the meantime, others were speculating on what may or may not happen *before* Rio, with continued uncertainty over whether an additional session might be scheduled in late May—something the Bureau is expected to consider on Friday. As of late Thursday evening, rumors were swirling that an additional session would indeed take place.

ENB SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS: The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* summary and analysis of this meeting will be available on Monday, 7 May 2012 online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/uncsd/iinzod2/>