

UNCSD INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS: TUESDAY, 29 MAY 2012

Delegates to the third round of “informal informal” consultations on the zero draft of the outcome document for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD, or Rio+20) convened at UN Headquarters, New York, for the first day of their five-day session. Negotiations took place in two Working Groups throughout the day and during night sessions. In addition, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon addressed delegates in the afternoon.

PLENARY

In the morning, UNCSD PrepCom Co-Chair John Ashe suggested that delegates look at the entirety of the 80 page Co-Chairs’ suggested text (CST) that was distributed on 22 May 2012, and ask themselves if this is the document that will send the desired message regarding sustainable development for the next 20 years or more. He called this a “make or break” week, and explained that Working Group I will consider sections V (framework for action) and VI (means of implementation), chaired by Ashe; and Working Group II will consider sections I (common vision), II (renewing political commitment), III (green economy) and IV (institutional framework for sustainable development), chaired by PrepCom Co-Chair Kim Sook.

At the beginning of the afternoon session, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon emphasized that the stakes at this final negotiation before Rio+20 are very high and issues can no longer remain unresolved in the text. He said the Rio+20 outcome should, *inter alia*, identify: a process to define sustainable development goals (SDGs); a new institutional framework; and mechanisms that stimulate economies to create decent jobs, provide social protection, and support a healthy environment. He called on negotiators to work with the CST and streamline it further in order to make Rio+20 a resounding success.

WORKING GROUP I

V. FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION AND FOLLOW UP:

Co-Chair Ashe suggested proceeding on a section-by-section basis. MEXICO said this section should be balanced and address themes that raise new contributions or initiatives. The EU suggested reorganizing the subsections, and the G-77/CHINA recalled its proposal to organize the subsections according to the order used in Agenda 21. The EU, CANADA, JAPAN, the REPUBLIC OF KOREA and NORWAY supported the CST.

Poverty eradication: The G-77/CHINA highlighted the subsection’s key elements, including references to the 2015 target date of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the need for economic growth, social protection, and the emphasis on least developing countries particularly in Africa, and suggested merging the three paragraphs along these lines.

On the second paragraph regarding sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth, the US, opposed by the HOLY SEE, suggested focus on expanding development opportunities of all, rather than only developing countries.

Regarding the third paragraph on the contribution of social services and social protection systems, the US proposed deleting reference to promoting “universal” access to social services. The EU suggested additional reference to supporting ongoing international efforts, including the International Labour Conference’s recommendation on social protection floors. Co-Chair Ashe called for informal consultations.

Sustainable agriculture, food security and nutrition:

On the first three paragraphs regarding the right to food and global food security, rural development, and the needs of rural communities with specific reference to women, the G-77/CHINA supported streamlining the text by highlighting gaps, proposals to overcome them and links to means of implementation, thereby deleting all other language, as well as merging the second and third paragraphs.

CANADA, supported by the REPUBLIC OF KOREA, the EU, SWITZERLAND and the HOLY SEE, proposed reference to nutrition, alongside food security. The US noted lack of an internationally agreed definition on nutrition security, and the HOLY SEE pointed to agreed language on “nutritional security” in the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020.

AUSTRALIA proposed reference to building resilience in addition to improved livelihoods of rural communities. JAPAN, opposed by NEW ZEALAND, proposed adding to the aims of rural development the contribution to positive externalities and sustainable use of natural resources, in particular land, water and biodiversity. Delegates addressed new language suggested by the EU on achieving by 2020 an increase of access of small-holder farmers, especially women in rural areas, to agricultural land, markets and finance, training, capacity-building, knowledge and innovative practices. CANADA, NEW ZEALAND and the US opposed the addition, noting its late submission and potential



duplication with the discussion on the sustainable development goals (SDGs). The G-77/CHINA also opposed, reiterating their position to have a comprehensive discussion on goals and targets in the context of the SDGs. JAPAN called for further exchange of views. Noting the meeting is “moving in the wrong direction,” NORWAY supported the text as is.

On increasing agricultural productivity, the G-77/CHINA requested replacing “recognizing the need” to “committing to,” and AUSTRALIA stressed the need for market-oriented approaches. SWITZERLAND, supported by the REPUBLIC OF KOREA, requested language on reducing “market price volatility,” while Canada qualified this reference with “excessive.” The EU, supported by NORWAY, suggested text on reducing food waste throughout the food cycle by 2030. The EU, opposed by CANADA, suggested adding specific dates by which to achieve various food-related goals. The G-77/CHINA stressed the importance of livestock production and the role of pastoralists. The G-77/CHINA, opposed by CANADA and JAPAN, requested deletion of reference to supporting technology transfer “as mutually agreed,” stating that previous approaches have not worked. CANADA noted that requiring agricultural trade to be “equitable” may be problematic from a World Trade Organization point of view. NEW ZEALAND, supported by AUSTRALIA, suggested text on “eliminating barriers and policies that distort production and trade” in agricultural products. The US suggested changing text on “the global food crisis” to “food insecurity and global food crises.” JAPAN supported piloting the use of the Committee on Food Security (CFS) process on Principles for Responsible Agricultural Investment (PRAI), while the US said that PRAI is but one of several agricultural investment frameworks that should be considered.

There was overall agreement on a paragraph on the role of healthy marine ecosystems and sustainable fisheries.

Water: CANADA proposed a revised paragraph that would, *inter alia*: reaffirm the human right of everyone to safe drinking water and basic sanitation as essential for the full enjoyment of life; recognize that the right to safe drinking water and basic sanitation does not encompass transboundary water issues including bulk water trade, nor any mandatory allocation of international development assistance; and indicate that governments will pursue the progressive realization of access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation for their citizens through national and sub-national actions with a particular emphasis on people living in vulnerable situations. The G-77/CHINA, the EU and SWITZERLAND preferred the CST to the Canadian proposal. The G-77/CHINA reserved on text regarding the efforts of developing countries towards efficient and sustainable water resource management.

The G-77/CHINA, opposed by the US and SWITZERLAND, proposed deleting text on cooperation at national, transboundary and international levels for water resources management.

The EU, supported by SWITZERLAND, proposed, *inter alia*, identifying 2030 as a target for: committing to realizing sustainable and equitable access to safe and clean drinking water and basic sanitation; and significantly improving the implementation of integrated water resource management at local, national and transboundary levels to maintain and achieve

good water status and protect ecosystems and protect natural resources. The US reserved on the integration of target-related text.

TURKEY proposed recognizing the importance of establishing, maintaining and upgrading water infrastructure in a sustainable manner, with a view to addressing water scarcity, managing floods and droughts and providing basic services. SWITZERLAND welcomed the proposal and suggested reformulating to reflect language agreed at the World Water Forum.

The US, supported by SWITZERLAND, NEW ZEALAND and NORWAY, suggested adding language from the previous Co-Chairs’ suggested text on recognizing the key role that natural ecosystems, especially wetlands and forests, play in maintaining freshwater quantity and quality, and supporting efforts to protect and sustainably manage these ecosystems.

Energy: CANADA, the REPUBLIC OF KOREA, AUSTRALIA, JAPAN and BELARUS supported the text as suggested by the Co-Chairs. The EU suggested amending the heading to “Sustainable Energy.” Regarding a paragraph on the role of energy in the development process, the EU suggested underlining the strong interdependence between energy, water and food security.

Regarding a paragraph on access to energy services, KAZAKHSTAN, opposed by the US, proposed encouraging the elaboration of a plan of action, taking into account available ecological resources, in order to promote equitable opportunities for both developing and developed countries.

On a paragraph on national and sub-national policies and strategies and means of implementation, delegates made multiple amendments to references to energy sources and technologies. TURKEY, opposed by ICELAND, suggested specific reference to hydropower.

Regarding the role of energy technologies in addressing climate change and in achieving the objective of limiting the global average temperature increase, the EU, supported by the G-77/CHINA and NORWAY, proposed specifying limiting such increase below 2° C above pre-industrial levels. The G-77/CHINA further suggested taking into account the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR) and historical responsibilities. CANADA referred to UN Framework Convention on Climate Change text on “respective capabilities,” rather than “historical responsibilities.” The RUSSIAN FEDERATION cautioned against getting into detail on climate change. The US suggested avoiding duplications with language on the section on climate change.

Regarding a paragraph on achieving the Secretary General’s “Sustainable Energy for All” initiative and its aspirational goals, KAZAKHSTAN suggested that international research and capacity development be based on a roadmap to be developed through a multilateral process, involving all stakeholders. The US proposed language stating that resources will be necessary to achieve these results, particularly through enabling environments that unlock private sector investments. The G-77/CHINA supported deleting the paragraph, in order to address the related targets as part of the SDGs process.

Delegates made multiple amendments on a paragraph on subsidies. Noting the contradictory amendments and adding that the issue of subsidies cannot be stereotyped, the G-77/CHINA suggested deleting the paragraph. NORWAY preferred retaining all paragraphs on energy.

Transport: On sustainable transport, the G-77/CHINA, opposed by the US and the EU, requested deletion of “reducing pollution and emissions.” The G-77/CHINA, opposed by the US, the EU, and the REPUBLIC OF KOREA, requested deletion of reference to “clean fuels and vehicles.” MEXICO suggested an additional paragraph on encouraging non-motorized mobility.

Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements: On improving the quality of human settlements, the US and the HOLY SEE suggested including access to food. The US and MEXICO urged consideration of urban green spaces. The G-77/CHINA stressed the importance of planning and technical assistance. Regarding ensuring “a safe and healthy living environment for all,” the EU, HOLY SEE and others requested consideration of older persons.

Health and Population: The HOLY SEE, opposed by the US, NEW ZEALAND, AUSTRALIA and ICELAND, requested that several references to sexual and reproductive health be removed.

Major Groups: NGOs stressed the importance of a rights-based approach to address hunger and food insecurity for vulnerable groups; welcomed the reference to urban-rural linkages to bridge food and the city; underlined the need to recapture food waste; and supported calls for a central role of the Committee on Food Security in sustainable agriculture. On sustainable cities, LOCAL AUTHORITIES prioritized: cohesion of territories beyond municipal boundaries; protection of urban biodiversity; and recognizing the work of organizations working on cities. WOMEN called for a rights-based approach to sustainable development, including language on the human right to water and sanitation, and for strengthened language on women and indigenous peoples in the context of agriculture and food security. On energy, she noted that efforts must be community-led, transparent and inclusive.

Forests: Delegates debated, among others, a target aiming at halting global forest cover loss by 2030 and whether the Non-legally Binding Instrument on all Types of Forests (NLBI) is the only global policy framework. The G-77/CHINA suggested alternative language from the Ministerial Declaration, calling for improving the livelihoods of people and communities, particularly in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, by creating the conditions needed for them to sustainably manage forests, including through strengthening cooperation in the areas of finance, trade, transfer of environmentally sound technologies, capacity building and governance, as well as by promoting secure land tenure, participatory decision making and benefit sharing in accordance with national legislation, policies and priorities.

Biodiversity: Delegates discussed, among other issues: the need to keep the text in line with language agreed in the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD); merging two paragraphs addressing access and benefit-sharing (ABS) and the Nagoya Protocol on ABS; a paragraph on the establishment of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services; and the role of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, its benefits for local people, and the importance of basing species listings on best available scientific

advice. The EU suggested alternative language regarding commitment to urgent action to ensure the achievement by 2020 of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. AUSTRALIA proposed highlighting the importance of managing biodiversity at landscape and seascape scales, enhancing habitat connectivity and building ecosystem resilience; and supporting the greater use of traditional knowledge, with prior informed consent. MEXICO suggested that cooperation and partnerships refer to all three CBD objectives, rather than only conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

Desertification: The EU proposed “committing to arriving at” zero net land “and soil” degradation within an internationally agreed timeframe, and added references to “soil” in addition to land in other sections, supported by ICELAND but opposed by the G-77/CHINA and the US. The US added references to a focus on arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid ecosystems. The G-77/CHINA, supported by AUSTRALIA, proposed adding reference to a “land degradation neutral world” in the place of the proposed target on “zero net land degradation.” The G-77/CHINA, supported by ICELAND, added a reference to the consideration of an intergovernmental panel on scientific advice. The US and MEXICO did not support this proposal.

WORKING GROUP II

SECTION I. OUR COMMON VISION: On paragraphs recognizing poverty eradication as the central element of sustainable development and reaffirming that poverty eradication remains the greatest challenge facing the world today, the G-77/CHINA highlighted poverty eradication, but others, including the REPUBLIC OF KOREA, JAPAN, the US and the EU, drew attention to multiple references to poverty eradication and overlap. The HOLY SEE called for retaining sustainable consumption and production (SCP). In the evening, a breakout group chaired by the US reported that two paragraphs on poverty eradication had been redrafted and parties agreed to delete the original text. Outstanding issues included “extreme” poverty, inclusion of CBDR, and whether to refer to “changing unsustainable” or “promoting sustainable” production and consumption patterns.

On reaffirming the importance of freedom, peace and security and respect for all human rights, the G-77/CHINA called for deleting “adequate” in reference to the right to food, while the US supported the right to an adequate standard of living, including food. The HOLY SEE, opposed by the US, NEW ZEALAND, NORWAY, ICELAND, ISRAEL and GRENADA, suggested replacing language on gender equality with language on equality between men and women.

On reaffirming the importance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the EU, NORWAY, ICELAND and GRENADA supported language to respect, protect and promote human rights. The US preferred “respect, protect and promote.” The EU, G-77/CHINA, LIECHTENSTEIN, NEW ZEALAND, NORWAY, ICELAND, GRENADA and the US supported including reference to disability.

The US clarified that their objection to changes in text reaffirming the importance of freedom, peace and security and respect for all human rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is principled as they are uncomfortable reopening language agreed at the last session. MEXICO, the US, NEW ZEALAND, NORWAY, the REPUBLIC OF KOREA and ICELAND underscored that they were close to agreeing

to text reaffirming continued guidance by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, and the importance of freedom, peace and security and respect for all human rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and expressed concern over extensive reopening of text. The EU cautioned against over-reliance on previously agreed text as circumstances change over time.

On acknowledging good governance and rule of law as essential for sustainable development, the EU, supported by SWITZERLAND, added a reference to democracy, which the G-77/CHINA said was “overemphasis,” and it was dropped. AUSTRALIA proposed text noting that environmental protection is essential for sustainable development, which was accepted. The G-77/CHINA suggested adding reference to “implementation gaps” in text on reaffirming commitment to strengthening international cooperation, but it was not supported.

In the afternoon, several amendments were proposed to text on sustainable development as a joint effort by the HOLY SEE, MEXICO and the EU, rewording language on the fundamental nature (or requirements) of sustainable development and peoples’ participation. The G-77/CHINA suggested adding reference to equity, sovereignty over national resources and the principle of CBDR. The Co-Chair left the paragraph to the break-out group.

SECTION II: RENEWING POLITICAL COMMITMENT

A. Reaffirming Rio Principles and Past Action Plans:

On reaffirming that all principles in the Rio Declaration will continue to guide the international community, the G-77/CHINA, opposed by the US, requested inclusion of the principle of CBDR. Chair Kim noted the carefully constructed compromise in this section, which saw agreement that CBDR should be used where it is most needed and not overused. NORWAY and the REPUBLIC OF KOREA said they could accept the CST and underscored that CBDR had to be addressed in the appropriate place.

On reaffirming commitments to international instruments respecting sustainable development, the US requested reference to the Cairo Programme of Action, ICPD+5 and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action to recognize the role of women in sustainable development. The G-77/CHINA said that, if these were referenced, the outcome document of the UN Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and its Impact on Development must also be included, which was opposed by the US and the REPUBLIC OF KOREA.

On recognizing the importance of the three Rio Conventions, CANADA proposed modifying reference to CBDR to reflect language in the UNFCCC. The US, the EU, JAPAN and NEW ZEALAND preferred not singling out individual principles from the UNFCCC. NEW ZEALAND suggested a compromise by adding “in accordance to their respective principles” after reference to all three Rio Conventions.

Disagreement ensued on whether to “implement,” “achieve” or “advance” sustainable development, in text on reaffirming commitment to reinvigorate political will and international commitment. SWITZERLAND, opposed by the G-77/CHINA, requested language on the other relevant internationally agreed goals in the economic, social and environmental fields, in addition to development goals.

B. Advancing Integration, Implementation and Coherence: Assessing the Progress to Date and the Remaining Gaps in the Implementation of the Outcomes of the Major

Summits on Sustainable Development and Addressing

New and Emerging Challenges: The US, opposed by G-77/CHINA, proposed adding “at national level” to language on an enabling environment. The G-77/CHINA also objected to the US adding “voluntary” and “on mutually agreed terms” to technology transfer. The G-77/CHINA supported text on avoiding “backtracking on previously taken international commitments.” The US added reference to pressure on resources through rapid population growth, and the G-77/CHINA called for “a rationalization” of unsustainable consumption and lifestyle patterns in developed countries. The EU and the US did not support two additional paragraphs proposed by the G-77/CHINA on climate change undermining the abilities of developing countries to achieve sustainable development, and on the effect of sanctions. The US, supported by JAPAN, CANADA and NEW ZEALAND, proposed mention of “strategies” on youth employment, with the G-77/CHINA calling for retention of one global strategy.

Paragraphs were agreed *ad referendum* on challenges faced by countries and on small island developing States (SIDS). On women’s empowerment, the US wished to retain its addition on access to reproductive health services, which the G-77/CHINA and the HOLY SEE suggested deleting. On text on Africa, the US called for deletion of reference to aid lagging behind commitments, and the G-77/CHINA introduced language to stress more attention to Africa and to full implementation of commitments. While reference to transit countries was deleted, the issue of specific challenges faced by middle-income countries led to differences, with the EU suggesting deletion of this paragraph and the RUSSIAN FEDERATION insisting on its retention.

Major Groups: LOCAL AUTHORITIES emphasized that any institutional process should include space for Major Group involvement and highlighted the role of local and subnational governments in implementing sustainable development, such as through local Agenda 21 actions. CHILDREN AND YOUTH said they need not just protection, but fulfillment of the right to develop to their full potential, and that a human rights-based approach must be the basis of the Rio+20 outcome.

IN THE CORRIDORS

As delegates embarked on their final week of emergency negotiations prior to Rio+20, many indicated that this “make or break” effort needs to achieve the final deal. In an increasingly loud chorus of statements leading into this session, UN leaders, The Elders and others called on negotiators to demonstrate a sense of urgency to clinch an agreement on the outcome document. This message was echoed in the special address from Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in the afternoon. The Co-Chairs, evidently in a tougher mood, began to employ a number of techniques to try to spur on negotiations, from tasking specific delegates to hold consultations in breakout “splinter groups” to promising to submit further refinements that would consolidate and tighten the 80-page document. However, according to a participant, the feeling of urgency in the top echelons of the UN has not yet filtered down to the drafting level, where delegates were making little headway as they struggled to reduce the amount of bracketed text.