

UNCSD INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS: THURSDAY, 31 MAY 2012

Delegates to the third round of UNCSD informal consultations continued negotiating in two Working Groups and a number of informal groups throughout the day and during night sessions.

WORKING GROUP I

V. FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION AND FOLLOW UP:

By the end of the day, 19 informal groups had been created or were anticipated, with facilitators identified for: climate change (Barbados); mining (Canada); food (US); chemicals and waste (Mexico); water (Iceland); disasters (Japan); desertification (Australia); oceans (Australia); forests, biodiversity and mountains (US); gender and education (Norway); jobs (EU); sustainable consumption and production (Guatemala); SIDS/regions (Monaco); health, cities, transport (Canada); and poverty eradication (EU). Additional groups were anticipated for sustainable development goals (SDGs), finance, technology and trade.

B. SDGs: CANADA, JAPAN and the REPUBLIC OF KOREA supported the text as drafted by the Co-Chairs.

Regarding SDGs' links with existing commitments, LEICHTENSTEIN suggested reference to human rights law. The US preferred deleting references to the UN Charter and principles that the SDGs should respect, as well as to specific issues they should address. The EU, supported by AUSTRALIA and ICELAND, said the SDGs should complement existing commitments and goals, including the MDGs.

Regarding text on the nature of SDGs and implementation, the US called for aspirational goals to be implemented by voluntary action at the national level. The G-77/CHINA proposed text that emphasized that SDGs should be "universally applicable, but nationally driven."

On text outlining indicative focus areas for the achievement of sustainable development, the EU, supported by the REPUBLIC OF KOREA, added reference to decent work. The G-77/CHINA said it was premature to choose specific themes, and Rio+20 would only launch a process to develop themes and other details.

Regarding the process for establishing the SDGs, the EU suggested that the UN Secretary-General establish a coordinated, inclusive and transparent process. The G-77/CHINA, supported by TURKEY, called for deletion of the paragraph, and said SDGs should be part of a "post-2015" agenda, and not divert resources from the MDGs. NORWAY urged concise goals.

The EU noted that measuring progress is critical for SDGs' success, suggested that targets for assessment could be differentiated by countries, and requested deleting a call for the Secretary-General's recommendations in this regard. The US preferred a menu of global indicators and targets. The

G-77/CHINA called for the paragraph's deletion, stating that it was premature to determine how the SDGs will be measured. Switzerland preferred retaining the original text.

On SDG reporting, the G-77/CHINA suggested text emphasizing the role of regional economic commissions and capacity building in developing countries. On methods of measuring sustainable development, natural wealth and social well-being alternatives to GDP, JAPAN agreed on the need to develop alternative indicators and supported the text. The EU, supported by the US, AUSTRALIA, NORWAY and ICELAND, said the issue should be addressed under the section on thematic areas and cross-sectoral issues. The US added that the UN Statistical Commission, rather than the UN Secretary-General, is the appropriate place for this work. The G-77/CHINA called for deletion of this paragraph.

VI. MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION: The US, supported by CANADA, said there should be a reference to the role of private philanthropy. The EU added a reference to human rights as essential for economic growth. The G-77/CHINA suggested deletion of paragraphs on national ownership and leadership, good governance and rule of law.

Finance: CANADA and the US said Rio+20 is not a pledging conference and called for deleting reference to increased provision of financing. They also proposed deleting text referring to the target of 0.7% of gross national product for official development assistance (ODA), stating that they had not agreed to it. JAPAN proposed updating text on untying aid from that used in the 2008 Doha Declaration to what was agreed in Busan, Republic of Korea in 2011.

The G-77/CHINA proposed: reaffirming the commitment to double the ODA for Africa and pledge to undertake timely measures in this regard; replacing text on ODA quality and impact with paragraph 43 from the Doha Declaration; committing to "increase the core resources" for operational activities of the UN development system; and deleting a paragraph on fighting corruption as a priority. NORWAY, supported by the REPUBLIC OF KOREA, highlighted the importance of fighting corruption, and added reference to illicit capital flows.

The EU proposed: adding a reference to inclusive development partnership, transparency and accountability, supported by NORWAY; changing "donors" to "development partners;" intensifying efforts to "promote fiscal stability" and prevent debt crises "particularly in Africa and the least developed countries;" and welcoming the achievements of the Global Environment Facility, supported by NEW ZEALAND.

The US, supported by the REPUBLIC OF KOREA, proposed adding text to recognize that resource mobilization is from multiple sources, including foreign direct investment, domestic



investment, domestic revenue generation, trade, private charities, foundations, and remittances. NEW ZEALAND preferred the original text.

Technology development and transfer: Delegates debated the title, with the US and CANADA preferring “technology development, innovation and science,” the EU “research, innovation and technology development,” and AUSTRALIA adding reference to collaboration.

The US, supported by JAPAN and CANADA, inserted references to knowledge in addition to technologies, and qualified that technology transfer should be voluntary and on mutually agreed terms and conditions.

The US, the EU, JAPAN, CANADA, AUSTRALIA and SWITZERLAND requested deleting text on the impact of patent protection and intellectual property rights (IPR). The G-77/CHINA noted the need for new flexibilities in the IPR regime.

The US, JAPAN and CANADA requested deleting a request to the UN system to identify options for a mechanism facilitating clean technology dissemination. The EU preferred retention, clarifying that transfer of technologies be voluntary. The G-77/CHINA proposed alternative text on establishing an international mechanism under the General Assembly.

The US, JAPAN and CANADA suggested deleting a paragraph addressing an international mechanism to facilitate technology transfer, support to existing centers, and requesting relevant UN agencies to identify options for a facilitation mechanism. The EU, SWITZERLAND and MEXICO supported retaining the paragraph with various amendments.

Capacity building: Delegates agreed *ad ref* to most of the text, as well as to a proposal by JAPAN to refer to “capacity building and development.” KAZAKHSTAN proposed, and delegates agreed, to refer to the participation of scientists from both developing and developed countries. The G-77/CHINA reserved on text on ways and means for capacity building.

MAJOR GROUPS: CHILDREN AND YOUTH urged consideration of the sexual and reproductive rights and health of young women, and consultation of youth on the SDGs. WOMEN called for a rights-based approach to establishing SDGs that considers gender and poverty. The SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL COMMUNITY expressed concern that the nexus of science, technology and sustainable development is not currently reflected in the draft.

WORKING GROUP II

IV. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (IFSD): The US and the G-77/CHINA reserved on establishing a high-level representative for sustainable development and future generations, while the EU, LIECHTENSTEIN, MEXICO and SWITZERLAND supported the idea. Several delegates supported the CST on the environmental pillar, but introduced amendments after the text was reopened. The G-77/CHINA suggested replacing the title of the subsection “Environmental Pillar” with “UNEP,” but others indicated it contains issues other than UNEP.

On strengthening the role of UNEP, amendments were introduced on its aims and objectives. A discussion ensued on whether this should be discussed in connection with alternative paragraphs on UNEP’s future status (universal membership of the Governing Council or establishing a specialized agency), with delegates deciding not to address this as a package. NORWAY, supported by the US, proposed establishing an executive board in the Governing Council. The G-77/CHINA suggested giving the Governing Council authority to lead and set the global policy agenda, the EU added “policy advice, early warning and reviewing the state of the environment,” and NORWAY added “advancing environmental law.” The G-77/CHINA included reference to financial resources from the UN regular budget. Several amendments addressed improved coordination among MEAs while respecting their legal autonomy and mandates. The G-77/CHINA reformulated text on capacity

building to include support for country-driven processes including through technology transfer. There was agreement on UNEP continuing to be based in Nairobi. The EU proposed text on ensuring full association of all relevant stakeholders and enhancing their participation.

On alternative versions regarding the future of UNEP, TURKEY and the REPUBLIC OF KOREA expressed preference for the specialized agency option, and the US, the RUSSIAN FEDERATION and CANADA objected.

On stressing the need for continuation of regular review of the state of the Earth: NORWAY preferred “Earth’s changing environment and its impact on human wellbeing;” SWITZERLAND the “Earth’s ecosystems;” and the EU, the Earth “and its carrying capacity.” The G-77/CHINA proposed alternative text taking note of the Global Environmental Outlook process.

JAPAN reframed language on reaffirming the need to continue strengthening participation of developing countries in international economic decision-making to better reflect “changes in the world economy.” The US proposed an alternative paragraph reaffirming the importance of “recent decisions” on governance reform in international decision-making.

Delegates agreed on text calling for further mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development throughout the UN system. On appropriate measures for integrating the dimensions across UN operational activities, the G-77/CHINA and MEXICO, in reference to increasing financial contributions to the UN, stressed “core resources, because of their untied nature.”

INFORMAL GROUPS: Throughout the day, three breakout groups convened on: “our common vision” and “renewing political commitment;” a “green economy;” and IFSD. In the evening, the G-77/CHINA, reporting on the group on “our common vision” and “renewing political commitment,” noted little further progress in streamlining the text. He presented new versions of text on determination to reinvigorate political will, recognizing uneven progress on sustainable development since the Earth Summit, and deep concern about the number of people living in extreme poverty.

CANADA reported on the group on green economy, saying changes were provisional pending further consultations. He noted the addition in brackets of mobilizing the full potential of both women and men, in text on recognizing different approaches to poverty eradication, and streamlining efforts on: implementing green economy as a common undertaking; urging countries to implement green economy policies; and acknowledging partnerships.

NORWAY reported that the group on IFSD made progress streamlining text on the importance of a strengthened IFSD and effective governance at local, sub-national, regional and global levels.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Participants commented that a number of elements related to the endgame for the Rio+20 outcome came into better focus on Thursday. Observers noted that, for the first time, all negotiating groups were willing to look favorably on identifying a process for the development of SDGs. After Working Group I completed its discussion on thematic areas, a process likened by some to “speed dating,” 19 informal groups were created to further negotiate each of them. Meanwhile, in Working Group II, delegates managed to complete a first reading of the IFSD. One element that some saw as a possible impediment to progress was the limited number of negotiators in delegations, making it difficult for multiple groups to work simultaneously. Many, however, welcomed the opportunity to get down to resolving tough issues in the smaller groups. “We’ve spent the last few days making a mess of the text” one delegate observed, “now our job is to clean it up, or at least present clear options.”