

CSD 17 HIGHLIGHTS: TUESDAY, 5 MAY 2009

Delegates to CSD 17 considered the Chair's draft negotiating text in their regional and interest groups during the morning, and then convened in two Working Groups during the afternoon to offer additions and amendments to the Chair's draft negotiating text.

WORKING GROUP I

Vice-Chair Raguz said the Group would consider the Chair's draft negotiating text related to the Preamble, Agriculture and Rural Development. Vice-Chair Mbuende chaired the negotiation on the Preamble and Agriculture.

PREAMBLE: Sudan, for the G-77/CHINA, highlighted the importance of referencing principle 2 on the sovereign right of States to exploit their natural resources in addition to principle 7 on common but differentiated responsibilities. The US and CANADA, supported by JAPAN, said the entire Rio Declaration on Environment and Development is important, not only these two principles.

Working Group I delegates agreed to adopt paragraphs on: the pillars of sustainable development; requirements for sustainable development; and the Declaration of the High-level Conference on World Food Security and the Bangkok and Windhoek intersessional meetings. The EU proposed text endorsing the statement of the Madrid High Level Meeting on Food Security for All. SWITZERLAND proposed text recalling the voluntary guidelines to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security. CANADA proposed text reaffirming the principles of aid effectiveness set out in the Paris Declaration. NORWAY suggested adding text reaffirming that States have a primary responsibility to make their best efforts to respect, ensure, fulfill and promote the right to regular and permanent access to adequate food.

Delegates agreed on several paragraphs, including reference to the high-level meeting in Madrid in January 2009 on food security. Additional reference to "means of implementation" by the G-77/CHINA was opposed by the US. The G-77/CHINA noted "deep concern" that agricultural development in developing countries has been negatively impacted by market distortions originating in subsidies in developed countries. This language was opposed by the US, the EU and SWITZERLAND. The G-77/CHINA proposed replacing reference to "high food prices" with "volatility in commodity market prices." ISRAEL suggested referencing rapid urbanization in developing countries.

The G-77/CHINA added text on the impact of the financial crisis and economic slowdown on developing countries' access to financing.

The G-77/CHINA submitted new language, *inter alia*, on: least developed countries; enhancing means of implementation; Africa's development needs; and development obstacles for people living under foreign occupation. The US commented that these proposals tend to overemphasize certain points, and are not the most effective way of addressing the concerns of developing countries. On text referencing the "green revolution," the US and CANADA said there was no consensus on the concept. The EU supported the original text.

AUSTRALIA suggested adding reference to "national" bottom-up implementation strategies. CANADA said bottom-up approaches are important but not to the exclusion of other approaches. The EU said, with respect to implementation strategies, the participation of women in decision-making should be recognized. The G-77/CHINA suggested that implementation strategies should enhance the participation of all stakeholders including women, youth, indigenous people and other local communities. CANADA suggested a new paragraph noting the contribution of, *inter alia*, national reporting, partnerships, learning centers and side events. The G-77/CHINA proposed new paragraphs and, supported by MEXICO, said policy measures should be outlined in the preamble and not the annex.

AGRICULTURE: Vice-Chair Mbuende told participants he aimed to negotiate through the entire document and not produce a compilation text. The G-77/CHINA introduced many changes, including: the right to food; mobilization of the political will and commitment from all relevant stakeholders especially the international community to revive the agricultural sectors in developing countries; creating an enabling environment to increase and sustain investment in agricultural sectors of developing countries; and strengthening the capacity of developing countries to enhance agricultural productivity. The US said agriculture should include agroforestry, silviculture and aquaculture. SWITZERLAND said agriculture is inextricably tied to natural resources, soil, water and biodiversity. CANADA underscored, *inter alia*, the importance of recognizing both female and male farmers. ISRAEL proposed mentioning multifunctional agriculture and small-scale farming. The US added "economically viable" in regard to ways of boosting agricultural production. She also proposed text focusing on a comprehensive approach.

WORKING GROUP II

Vice-Chair Mansour chaired the afternoon's discussions.

LAND: Brazil, for the G-77/CHINA, expressed concern with the reference to "providing ecosystem services, sequestering carbon and regulating climate," proposed adding "enhanced living conditions for local populations" as one of the benefits of sustainable land management (SLM), and suggested specifying that land access should be in a manner consistent with the sovereign right of States to exploit their own resources. The US suggested that SLM provides ecosystem services, "including" sequestering carbon and "contributing to the regulation of" climate.

NORWAY proposed adding text calling for action to elaborate voluntary guidelines for land rights based on the FAO initiative. The US said implementation of strategies should be "based on the ecological potential of the land to support the provision of multiple ecosystem services," and proposed adding text regarding the development and implementation of systems to inventory, assess and monitor the capacity of the land to provide ecosystem services. SWITZERLAND suggested indicating that strategies be implemented in order to protect and monitor the sustainable use of soils more effectively at the global level.

On strengthening capacities for land management, CANADA proposed referencing local and national capacities. The G-77/CHINA said land management approaches should be both sustainable and integrated.

In the paragraph on land-use planning, the US suggested text on supporting ecosystem services including biodiversity conservation and clean and reliable water services. In reference to providing financial resources, the G-77/CHINA added text on: increasing financing to initial start-up costs in order to support small-scale farmers in acquiring land management technologies and adopting sustainable practices; and improving the institutional and legal capacity of developing countries to monitor and assess land resources and to implement sustainable land planning, administration and management. The G-77/CHINA bracketed the paragraph on developing global policy indicators for policy review, monitoring and evaluation. The EU supported retaining it and adding reference to taking advantage of new locally adapted and cost-effective mapping and surveying technologies.

SWITZERLAND suggested improving existing and developing new risk management tools that build landscape resilience, and systematically integrating them into land use and spatial planning strategies. The G-77/CHINA suggested adding subparagraphs calling for: including all stakeholders in the establishment of knowledge management networks and database of land experts, while ensuring national ownership; and promoting access to and transfer of appropriate technologies to developing countries; further strengthening the role of national authorities in implementing sustainable land policies; and ensuring that incentives to reduce land degradation also promote poverty eradication and employment opportunities in developing countries.

Regarding strengthening partnerships and stakeholder participation, the G-77/CHINA bracketed text on achieving consensus on community land resource allocation and management. SWITZERLAND proposed adding "and traditional" to the reference on incorporating indigenous knowledge. The G-77/CHINA proposed rephrasing it to "traditional knowledge, including indigenous." The US proposed referencing "smartgrowth initiatives."

Regarding the use of practices such as conservation agriculture and agroforestry, CANADA, supported by the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, proposed deleting the specific reference to arid and semi-arid lands. SWITZERLAND added

reference to avoiding urban sprawl, and the G-77/CHINA called for referencing capacity building in developing countries. The G-77/CHINA proposed replacing a subparagraph on monitoring soil quality and land degradation with one that emphasizes strengthening developing countries' capacity for such monitoring. CANADA suggested moving a subparagraph on using land's potential as a carbon sink out of the drought section.

On integrated management of water and land resources, the G-77/CHINA proposed an emphasis on supporting national policies, bracketed subparagraphs on promoting efficient and sustainable water resources and "appropriate management arrangements," and requested clarification of the reference to "a balance between the different water uses and ecosystems." The Secretariat explained that this language was in line with that used in documents by UN-Water. The G-77/CHINA highlighted improving the efficiency of water management practices, and reducing coastal erosion and land losses through land-use planning and climate change adaptation programmes.

On land tenure, the G-77/CHINA suggested adding "promote equitable access to land." The US suggested encouraging the establishment of effective land administration systems that include clear tenure and registration systems to help promote investment and good land management, making use of the latest cost effective information technologies. The G-77/CHINA bracketed the paragraph on creating a menu of options to document and recognize all forms of land rights.

AUSTRALIA said text calling for "access to credit" should be access to "commercial" credit and the G-77/CHINA said access should be "in developing countries." The US proposed calling for recognition of secondary use rights such as grazing. The G-77/CHINA suggested replacing text calling for ensuring pastoralist grazing rights are adequately protected with text calling for secure access to land through the recognition of land rights, in particular for women, indigenous peoples, and other vulnerable groups. He also proposed adding a section on means of implementation. The US and EU said means of implementation will be discussed in the interlinkages section.

DROUGHT: CANADA, supported by the EU, suggested amending the opening paragraph to refer to "drought management" rather than "drought prevention," NORWAY proposed text on disaster risk reduction, the G-77/CHINA proposed text on contingency planning, and the US proposed adding a passage on "the maintenance of economic and ecosystem services" and replacing the reference to "water basin management" with "watershed management."

IN THE CORRIDORS

Many participants seemed to appreciate that the CSD negotiations had gotten off to a good start, and they expressed relief that the minor confusion over which draft would serve as a basis for the talks has been left behind. When delegates left the IPM in February, some wondered about the exact way the negotiators would address the Chair's draft negotiating text, which was presented on the last afternoon of the session. As the CSD 17 began, two versions of that draft, one dated 24 March and the other 26 March, were in circulation.

Nevertheless, delegates indicated that the draft offers a good starting point, and noted that the first reading was proceeding well. Still, some did not seem to be tuned into the mode through which the Secretariat intends to make the negotiating text available. According to the Secretariat, as reported in the UN Journal, delegations can request a user name and password from battikhi@un.org to access an "e-room" where the updated text will be placed. A hard copy version is expected to be distributed to the major groups at 9:00 am.