

## SUMMARY OF THE UNCSO (RIO+20) REGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETING FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC: 19-20 OCTOBER 2011

The Asia and Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSO or Rio+20) convened at the Lotte Hotel in Seoul, Republic of Korea, from 19-20 October 2011. An estimated 300 participants from governments, UN bodies, intergovernmental organizations, Major Groups, and the media attended this preparatory event for the UNCSO, which will take place in June 2012 in Rio de Janeiro. The meeting included a number of government ministers and other senior officials. It was organized by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in collaboration with the UN Environment Programme and the Asian Development Bank.

Participants shared their views on the main themes of the UNCSO: a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and the global institutional framework for sustainable development (IFSD). They also reflected on progress to date and gaps in implementation since the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED).

On the green economy, many speakers found merit in the idea. However, some did not support it or raised concerns and caveats about the concept, seeking assurances that the idea would not be used as a pretext for protectionism or imposing trade conditionalities. A number of speakers stated that a one-size-fits-all approach to a green economy would not work, given countries' unique circumstances.

On IFSD, participants expressed a range of views. Most speakers agreed on the value of strengthening IFSD and international environmental governance (IEG). Many favored "strengthening" UNEP, but there was no consensus on whether this should be achieved under UNEP's current status and structure, or should involve elevating UNEP's status to that of a UN Environment Organization (UNEO) or World Environment Organization (WEO). There was also interest in and support for a proposal to establish a Council on Sustainable Development,

although this support was not universal. The outcome document did not include specific references to UNEP nor did it mention any other specific bodies such as the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) or the proposed Sustainable Development Council.

Participants in Seoul also engaged in lengthy discussions on the form and content of the meeting's outcome, with discussions over whether the outcome should take the form of an agreed "statement" or a Chair's summary. Ultimately, delegates adopted both a short "Seoul Outcome" as its agreed output of the meeting and the Chair produced and distributed his own more detailed summary.

Most delegates seemed pleased with the Seoul Outcome as an agreed document that could be submitted on behalf of the group, although there was a sense among some that the final text, which was much shorter than the original draft and contained mostly general principles, represented the "least common denominator." On the other hand, several delegates observed that the Asia-Pacific group is particularly large and diverse and that agreement on a more detailed document would have been difficult.

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Several suggested that the time for detailed negotiations had not yet arrived, while others noted that the Chair's summary complements the agreed outcome.

The recommendations from this meeting will be submitted to the Rio+20 Preparatory Committee, which is receiving inputs for the compilation document until 1 November 2011.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCES

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD or Rio+20) will mark the 40th anniversary of the first major international political conference that specifically had the word "environment" in its title. The UNCSD seeks to secure renewed political commitment for sustainable development, assess progress and implementation gaps in meeting previously-agreed commitments, and address new and emerging challenges. The focus of the Conference includes the following themes to be discussed and refined during the preparatory process: a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication; and the institutional framework for sustainable development

**STOCKHOLM CONFERENCE:** The UN Conference on the Human Environment was held in Stockholm, Sweden, from 5-16 June 1972, and produced three major sets of decisions. The first decision was the Stockholm Declaration. The second was the Stockholm Action Plan, made up of 109 recommendations on international measures against environmental degradation for governments and international organizations. The third set of decisions was a group of five resolutions calling for: a ban on the testing of nuclear weapons; the creation of an international databank on environmental data; addressing actions linked to development and the environment; the creation of an environment fund; and establishing the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as the central node for global environmental cooperation and treaty making.

**BRUNDTLAND COMMISSION:** In 1983, the UN General Assembly decided to establish an independent commission to formulate a long-term agenda for action. Over the next three years, the World Commission on Environment and Development—more commonly known as the Brundtland Commission, named for its Chair, Gro Harlem Brundtland—held public hearings and studied the issues. Its report, *Our Common Future*, which was published in 1987, stressed the need for development strategies in all countries that recognized the limits of the ecosystem's ability to regenerate itself and absorb waste products. The Commission emphasized the link between economic development and environmental issues, and identified poverty eradication as a necessary and fundamental requirement for environmentally sustainable development.

**UN CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT:** UNCED, also known as the Rio Earth Summit, was held from 3-14 June 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and involved over 100 Heads of State and Government, representatives from 178 countries, and some 17,000 participants. The principal outputs of UNCED were the Rio

Declaration on Environment and Development, Agenda 21 (a 40-chapter programme of action) and the Statement of Forest Principles. The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity were also opened for signature during the Earth Summit. Agenda 21 called for the creation of a Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), as a functional commission of ECOSOC, to ensure effective follow-up of UNCED, enhance international cooperation, and examine progress in implementing Agenda 21 at the local, national, regional and international levels.

**UNGASS-19:** The 19th Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) for the Overall Review and Appraisal of Agenda 21 (23-27 June 1997, New York) adopted the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 (A/RES/S-19/2). It assessed progress since UNCED and examined implementation.

**WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:** The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) met from 26 August - 4 September 2002, in Johannesburg, South Africa. The goal of the WSSD, according to UNGA Resolution 55/199, was to hold a ten-year review of UNCED at the Summit level to reinvigorate the global commitment to sustainable development. The WSSD gathered over 21,000 participants from 191 governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, the private sector, civil society, academia and the scientific community. The WSSD negotiated and adopted two main documents: the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI); and the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development.

The JPOI is designed as a framework for action to implement the commitments originally agreed at UNCED and includes chapters on: poverty eradication; consumption and production; the natural resource base; health; small island developing states; Africa; other regional initiatives; means of implementation; and institutional framework. The Johannesburg Declaration outlines the path taken from UNCED to the WSSD, highlights challenges, expresses a commitment to sustainable development, underscores the importance of multilateralism and emphasizes the need for implementation.

**64TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY:** On 24 December 2009, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 64/236 and agreed to convene the UNCSD in 2012 in Brazil. Resolution 64/236 also called for holding three Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) meetings prior to the UNCSD. On 14 May 2010, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon announced the appointment of UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs Sha Zukang as Secretary-General for the Conference. The UN Secretary-General subsequently appointed Brice Lalonde (France) and Elizabeth Thompson (Barbados) as executive coordinators.

**UNCSD PREPCOM I:** The first session of the PrepCom for the UNCSD was held from 17-19 May 2010, at UN Headquarters in New York. The PrepCom took up both substantive and procedural matters. On the substantive side, delegates assessed progress to date and the remaining gaps in implementing

outcomes of major summits on sustainable development. They also discussed new and emerging challenges, a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and the IFSD. On the procedural side, participants met in contact groups to organize their work in the lead-up to 2012, and to consider the UNCSD's rules of procedure.

**FIRST INTERSESSIONAL MEETING FOR THE UNCSD:** The first Intersessional Meeting for the UNCSD convened from 10-11 January 2011, at UN Headquarters in New York. During the meeting, delegates listened to a summary of the findings of the Synthesis Report on securing renewed political commitment for sustainable development, which: assesses progress to date and remaining gaps in implementing the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development; and addresses new and emerging challenges. Panel discussions were also held on the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and on the IFSD.

**UNCSD PREPCOM II:** The second session of the PrepCom for the UNCSD took place from 7-8 March 2011, at UN Headquarters in New York. Delegates discussed progress to date and remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development, addressed new and emerging challenges, discussed the scope of a green economy and the idea of a blue economy, and debated the IFSD. At the end of the meeting, a decision was adopted by consensus on the process for preparing the draft outcome document for the UNCSD.

**UNCSD REGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETING FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN:** This event was held at the headquarters of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in Santiago, Chile, from 7-9 September 2011. The meeting provided an opportunity for ministers and heads of delegation, as well as members of civil society and the UN, to share their views on the main themes of the UNCSD as well as on progress to date and gaps in implementation since UNCED. The main outcome of this meeting was a set of conclusions, which were negotiated by government representatives over the course of the meeting. Conclusions include: finding better ways to measure the wealth of countries that adequately reflect the three pillars of sustainable development; and a flexible and efficient global IFSD ensuring effective integration of the three pillars. The conclusions do not mention "green economy," as government representatives could not agree on whether to refer to the concept. The conclusions will be submitted to the Rio+20 Preparatory Committee.

**HIGH-LEVEL SYMPOSIUM ON THE UNCSD:** This Symposium, which took place from 8-9 September 2011 in Beijing, China, aimed to facilitate in-depth discussions among all relevant stakeholders on both the objective and the two themes of Rio+20, in order to formulate concrete proposals as a contribution to preparations for the UNCSD. Participants emphasized five new and emerging issues for "priority attention": energy access, security, and sustainability; food security and sustainable agriculture; water scarcity and sound water management; improved resilience and disaster

preparedness; and land and soil degradation and sustainable land management. On the IFSD, participants highlighted that reforms should be guided by a set of principles, including: agreement on core problems to be addressed; form should follow function and substance; any reform should not only improve integration of the three pillars of sustainable development, but restore the balance among these pillars; enhancing transparency; and embracing complexity by simplifying administration, implementation and compliance arrangements.

**UNCSD ARAB REGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETING:** This meeting took place from 16-17 October 2011, in Cairo, Egypt. On the green economy, delegates highlighted the lack of a universal definition and agreed to identify the green economy as a tool for sustainable development rather than as a new principle that might replace sustainable development. Some participants raised concerns that the green economy concept might add constraints on the development or socio-economic requirements of their countries and the recommendations from this meeting spell conditions for the use of any future green economy concept.

Regarding the IFSD, many delegates brought their national experiences to the table, with some explaining, for example, that they have or are in the process of establishing national sustainable development councils. Some said they could not discuss the international options in detail until the proposals and their financial implications are fully fleshed out.

During the conference, participants highlighted the need for balance among the three pillars of sustainable development. The meeting also featured the very active engagement of Major Groups. The conclusions will be submitted to the Rio+20 Preparatory Committee.

## REPORT OF THE MEETING

The meeting opened on Wednesday morning, 19 October 2011. Sha Zukang, Secretary-General of UNCSD Secretariat and UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, highlighted Asia-Pacific economic dynamism and progress in combating poverty. However, he also identified serious challenges such as rapid urbanization, climate change and sea-level rise. Stating that "you have much at stake" in the Rio+20 process, he reminded delegates that Rio+20's aim is to secure a political commitment and a focused political outcome.

On the theme of the green economy, Secretary-General Sha Zukang detected an emerging convergence, while noting that some concerns remain. He suggested defining what the green economy is *not*, stressing that it is not a top down, one-size-fits-all model, an excuse for protectionism, or a pretext to placing the environment under private sector control. He noted suggestions for a green economy roadmap with a menu of policy options and a toolkit. Drawing attention to a recent proposal for sustainable development goals (SDGs), he suggested that Rio+20 could agree on broad areas for elaborating long-term goals and that a post-Rio+20 follow-up process would be required in coordination with discussions on a post-2015 development

framework after the MDGs' target period. Finally, on the IFSD, he noted a range of proposals, including strengthening UNEP and establishing a sustainable development council.

Nessim Ahmad, Director, Environment and Social Safeguards Division, Asian Development Bank, affirmed the need for "inclusive growth" that is decoupled from environmental degradation. He suggested that green technology and payments for ecosystem services may become opportunities and drivers for growth, noting the need for technical assistance and capacity development in areas such as environmental impact assessment and compliance, and affirming the importance of public disclosure.

Young-Woo Park, Regional Director and Representative for Asia and the Pacific, UNEP, underlined the opportunity for Rio+20 to mark a paradigm shift and said green economies increase wealth and employment. He suggested that IFSD and a green economy are interdependent, and that sustainable development cannot be achieved without both. He pointed to a need for policies to correct perverse economic incentives that ignore social and environmental externalities.

Speaking for Henri Djombo, Minister of Sustainable Development, Forest Economics and Environment, Republic of Congo, a government official called for mutual cooperation between Africa and the Asia-Pacific region in working toward a green economy and new and strengthened institutions. He expressed hope and optimism that the views of most African and Asian countries are converging toward a common position.

Shun-ichi Murata, Deputy Executive Secretary of ESCAP, said a crisis of the "three Fs" (food, fuel and finance) required enhancing the "three Es" (economy, environment and equity) and highlighting the promise of the "three Gs" (global green growth). Emphasizing that "we can't just ask whether a green economy is feasible or not," he called on delegates to build a global partnership to align growth with sustainable development, expressing confidence that the Asia-Pacific region will play a key role.

Yoo Young-Sook, Minister of Environment, Republic of Korea, highlighted her country's national strategy of low-carbon green growth since 2008. She offered to share experiences and called on the international community to narrow the implementation gap in environmental agreements and commitments in the IFSD.

Co-Chair of the UNCSD Bureau, Kim Sook (Republic of Korea), observed that Rio+20 comes at a critical time during multiple global crises. He said Rio+20 is an opportunity to provide a clear vision, strong political commitment, concrete action plans, and strong and effective follow-up mechanisms. He suggested that Rio+20 address sustainable access to energy, marine resources and the "blue economy." On green economy, he noted pioneering work by ESCAP and several governments in the region. On IFSD, he noted suggestions to reform UNEP, strengthen ECOSOC, expand the CSD or establish a new council. Outlining next steps on the road to Rio+20, he noted the 1 November 2011 deadline for submission of inputs by governments, Major Groups and UN agencies. He explained

that the Bureau would develop a compilation document based on inputs by late November, which would be discussed at an intersessional meeting at UN Headquarters in New York in mid-December. Following this, a "zero draft" would be prepared by early 2012 and would be the basis for further discussions.

**Organizational Matters:** On Wednesday morning, delegates elected Yoon Jong-Soo, Vice-Minister of Environment, Republic of Korea, as Chair of the meeting. Two Vice-Chairs were also elected from each of the subregions, including representatives from China, the Russian Federation, Thailand, Indonesia, India, Bangladesh, Kazakhstan, Australia and Samoa. Delegates also adopted the provisional agenda (EDD/UNCSD/RPM/INF/3/Rev.1).

### **SESSION ONE: INTRODUCTION**

The ESCAP Secretariat provided an overview of how the meeting would be organized over the two days (EDD/UNCSD/RPM/INF/3/Rev.1). He explained it would begin with presentations from recent global and subregional events relevant to this meeting. Following this, there would be sessions on the green economy, IFSD and stakeholder perspectives. In addition, there would be discussions on the meeting outcome.

**PERSPECTIVES FROM GLOBAL AND SUBREGIONAL CONSULTATIONS:** Fa'amoetuloa Taito Faale Tumaalii, Minister of State, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Samoa, reported on the UNCSD Pacific Subregional Joint Ministerial Meeting held in Apia, Samoa, from 20-22 July 2011, as well as subsequent follow-up meetings. He highlighted Pacific small island developing states' (SIDS) special challenges in protecting and sustainably managing the "global commons" contained in the vast Pacific Ocean, and the need to strengthen and build partnerships, external financing and capacity building to foster a "green economy in a blue world."

Kilaparti Ramakrishna, ESCAP Office for East and North-East Asia, briefed participants on a review of national and subregional activities and processes for the UNCSD held during the 16th Senior Officials Meeting of the North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation in Seoul from 1-2 September 2011. He highlighted key messages from the Chair's summary, including participants' comments on the need for Rio+20 to deliver a concise political declaration on green economy and IFSD.

Yifan La, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, China, reported on the High-Level Symposium on UNCSD held in Beijing, China, from 8-9 September 2011. He noted participants' comments that the UNCSD outcome should be action-oriented and consensus-based and should not renegotiate or retract existing instruments, agreements or principles, such as that of common but differentiated responsibilities. He also highlighted countries' unique circumstances. On the green economy, he suggested that there is not yet a universally-accepted definition of the term, but wide agreement that it has potential as an instrument to support sustainable development across all three pillars. He cautioned that it should not become a pretext for green protectionism or conditionalities.

Dana Adyana Kartakusuma, Assistant Minister, Economy and Sustainable Development, Indonesia, reported on the High-level Dialogue on an Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development held in Solo, Indonesia, from 19-21 July 2011. He noted participants' interest in proposals to adjust the mandate of ECOSOC, establish a Sustainable Development Council and confer specialized agency status on UNEP, highlighting particular progress on this last option. He also underscored discussion on a dedicated fund for sustainable development and possible goals, especially on sustainable energy. He reflected that negotiating specific sustainable development goals may "bog down" Rio+20, but that there could be an agreement in principle to do so. He also noted interest in enhancing stakeholder engagement in implementation.

Ruslan Iskanderovich Bultrikov, Deputy Minister of the Environment, Kazakhstan, presented the Astana Green Bridge Partnership Programme, which aims to enhance cooperation and encourage green industries. He invited concrete programme ideas for its 2011-2020 roadmap and noted the self-financing nature of the programme. He also outlined its sectoral focus on: protecting water, mountain and other ecosystems; sustainable energy availability and efficiency; food security and sustainable agriculture; sustainable urban infrastructure and transport; and adaptation to climate change and natural disasters.

Rajneesh Dube, Ministry of Environment and Forests, India, briefed delegates on the Delhi Ministerial Dialogue on Green Economy and Inclusive Growth, which took place from 3-4 October 2011. He drew attention to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and said the green economy is not an alternative to sustainable development. He further added that the green economy should create opportunities for everyone, irrespective of a country's level of development. He suggested that it should also foster job creation and include a focus on small- and medium-sized enterprises. He noted concerns that the green economy could distract from sustainable development and should not result in green protectionism.

## **SESSION TWO: GREEN ECONOMY**

On Wednesday afternoon, the Secretariat introduced the issue of the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication as it relates to the Asia-Pacific (EDD/UNCSD/RPM/2). He suggested that rapid economic growth and recent successes in combating poverty and hunger in the Asia-Pacific were now threatened by rising food and energy prices, climate change and other crises. He indicated that a green economy is a shift away from the "grow now, clean up later" approach, and said Rio+20 could include roadmaps, toolkits and the means to support developing countries based on their needs.

Many delegates spoke on this topic. Most found merit in the idea of a green economy, although many also raised various concerns and caveats about the concept and sought assurances that the idea would not be used as a pretext for protectionism or imposing trade conditionalities. A number of speakers stated that a one-size-fits-all approach to a green economy would not work, given countries' unique circumstances. The need for the

green economy to combat poverty was frequently noted. Many speakers also outlined their domestic actions aimed at greening the economy.

Her Royal Highness Princess Chulabhorn Mahidol, Thailand, outlined her country's sustainable development policies focused on agriculture, sustainable natural resources management, poverty and health.

Samoa said a green economy strategy targeting poverty reduction can help achieve the MDGs. He highlighted the importance of planning at the community level, as well as responsible national policies. He also emphasized pro-poor policies, microcredit, fiscal and taxation reforms, and capacity building.

Tonga underscored that a green economy is not a substitute for sustainable development and that Tonga has a capacity constraint in building a green economy.

Bhutan described how his country has a plan for a green economy and a sustainable development agenda, a measure of gross national happiness, and priorities for emotional and spiritual wellbeing.

Australia said moving toward a green economy creates opportunities and requires flexibility to suit national circumstances. He welcomed the initiative for a blue economy valuing marine ecosystems and coastal areas, and cited the need for Rio+20 to make progress on food and water security and sustainable energy.

China said no single model of the green economy can be applied universally. He suggested the international community act on the principle of mutual benefit, noting that poverty eradication is the top priority for developing countries.

Cambodia highlighted the vulnerability of its agricultural sector and proposed that Rio+20 present a way forward for full realization of the green economy without further trade barriers.

The Philippines welcomed the green economy as a new rallying point for the three pillars of sustainable development and requested prioritization of food security. She called for a green economy to protect workers' rights and for international support to promote the skills and competencies of workers, especially those in conventional brown industries. She recommended negotiating binding global institutional arrangements for greener production.

Japan proposed two initiatives for adoption at Rio+20: that all newly-formed megacities are constructed in a sustainable manner to maximize the use of new technologies; and that each country agrees to launch a national initiative to promote sustainable development through education.

Malaysia highlighted national actions towards energy efficiency, eco-labeling and green procurement. He expressed concern over the lack of consensus on the green economy, affirming that "sustainability rests almost entirely on getting the economy right."

The Republic of Korea identified the green economy as a new engine for poverty eradication and highlighted the work of the Global Green Growth Institute.

Viet Nam noted the implementation of policies to support a green economy at the national and local levels. Globally and regionally, she supported enhancing bilateral and multilateral mechanisms; technology transfer; removing subsidies; and enhancing multi-stakeholder participation.

New Zealand stressed the value of the “blue world” for industry, tourism, agriculture, livelihoods, and sustainable development. She said Rio+20 offers an opportunity to reduce incentives for overfishing and eliminate energy market distortions by restructuring taxes and phasing out fishery and fossil fuel subsidies.

India stressed the need to: scale-up access to modern energy services and leapfrog to new technologies; make equity the bedrock for future actions; invest in natural and human capital; reverse land degradation; meet the needs of small and marginal farmers; improve sanitation; and ensure that developed countries take on commitments first.

France said a green economy offers win-win opportunities for all countries and can operationalize sustainable development rather than replace it. He called for a green economy roadmap and global cooperative action on water, food security, fisheries, forestry, energy, chemicals, ecosystem services, the elimination of harmful subsidies, and new indicators.

Turkey expressed support for a green economy as a way of integrating the social and economic pillars with the environment.

The Russian Federation expressed concern that the green economy may be used to push countries towards global standards that have not been agreed, proposing that member states request ESCAP to study whether “green jobs” will be able to compensate for job losses in traditional industries. She questioned whether the use of genetically modified organisms in agriculture can be considered a green technology. She asserted that the green economy cannot replace commitments under the Kyoto Protocol, and expressed concern about the ambiguity of language such as “ensuring benefits are equitably shared.”

Indonesia noted business opportunities in low-carbon development and in the use of biodiversity in the horticulture and pharmaceutical industries, reiterating concerns that the green economy should not be used to usher in protectionism.

Bangladesh advocated flexibility in a green economy to account for different levels of social and economic development, as well as a focus on poverty and the removal of harmful subsidies.

Mongolia said that a green economy is an engine to achieve sustainable development, and called for models for developing low-carbon industrial services and improving living conditions.

Pakistan said that a green economy could enhance access to technology and best practices.

### **SESSION THREE: AN INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

On Thursday morning, participants considered the UNCSO theme of an institutional framework for sustainable development (IFSD). The Secretariat presented the background document on this theme (EDD/UNCSO/RPM/2) and provided a briefing

on this topic in the context of Asia and the Pacific. He noted the role of various institutions in the current IFSD, including the General Assembly, ECOSOC, CSD, regional commissions, UNEP, UNDP, other UN agencies and funds, and international financial institutions. He noted that IEG is a part of the IFSD and outlined outcomes from the Nairobi-Helsinki process, including recommendations to enhance UNEP, establish a new umbrella organization for sustainable development, and further integrate the three pillars of sustainable development.

Many delegates expressed their views on the various options for institutional reforms. On UNEP’s role and status, most speakers supported strengthening UNEP, but there was no consensus on whether this should be achieved under UNEP’s current status and structure, or should involve elevating UNEP’s status to that of a UNEO. There was also considerable interest and some support for a proposal to establish a Sustainable Development Council. However, the proposal did not garner universal support, with several speakers preferring to use existing structures as the basis for reform, rather than establishing new ones. A number of countries endorsed better coordination among multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs).

With regards to UNEP, India said it should be strengthened but was not convinced that elevating it to a UNEO or similar level was necessary. China said UNEP’s functions should be reinforced with financial and technical support that will raise its efficiency. Malaysia supported the creation of a WEO at Rio+20, as a consultative and facilitative body. He stipulated that it should not act as a regulatory body like the World Trade Organization, but should act as a specialized agency that is autonomous but linked to the UN, and should facilitate decision-making based on universal voting and “one country, one vote.” Cambodia also supported a WEO.

On the proposal for a new UN Sustainable Development Council, India said this was worth further consideration, based on the idea that form should follow function. The Republic of Korea supported the elevation of the CSD to a Sustainable Development Council with an enhanced mandate for monitoring of implementation. She called for strengthening UNEP within its current structure as a specialized agency, so as to bring it into line with other agencies and to manage MEAs more effectively. Cambodia also supported a new Sustainable Development Council. Japan said needs should be assessed in the lead-up to Rio+20, and no assumption should be made that new organizations should be created. New Zealand said it may be more effective to strengthen existing institutions and eliminate gaps and duplication, rather than to create new bodies. Thailand called for adjustments to existing mechanisms to make them more useful for developing countries, and said new frameworks should not put a financial or legal burden on developing countries.

Regarding principles guiding IFSD, India said these should include the right to development, poverty eradication, equity, balance among the three pillars, reducing consumption by the rich, and promoting adequate flow of resources and technologies to developing countries.

On other elements of IFSD, India said the Global Environment Facility needs to be strengthened and funding made more predictable and transparent. The Republic of Korea noted that IFSD should be strengthened at all levels, including at the local level. Japan supported mainstreaming environmental concerns into national strategies, stating that the CSD should not take up issues already addressed under other bodies. Australia articulated a need for a new institutional framework to govern the next twenty years and address needs for food and water security, sustainable energy, and the vitality of the oceans. He stressed the need to reduce duplication and fragmentation of governance, and to coordinate agencies and private institutions to get results for the poorest and most vulnerable populations.

Palau noted the diversity in the Asia-Pacific region and asked for the needs of subregions to be considered. He supported Samoa's call for coordinated service efforts and strengthening of human resource capacity in Pacific Island states.

#### **SESSION FOUR: STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES**

On Thursday morning, participants heard statements from organizers of recent multi-stakeholder consultations designed to provide input for Rio+20. They also heard statements by major groups and international organizations on the green economy and IFSD.

#### **PERSPECTIVES FROM MULTI-STAKEHOLDER**

**CONSULTATIONS:** Delegates were briefed on a number of recent meetings held in the Asia-Pacific region and designed to provide input to Rio+20. Below is a list of these meetings and key messages, as presented.

**Road to Rio+20: Charting Our Path (October 2011, Seoul, Republic of Korea):** Third World Network briefed participants on a meeting held a few days earlier in Seoul. She said the environmental dimension of sustainable development has been weak while the economic dimension has resulted in instabilities in the global financial system and ecological crisis. She said that livelihoods and rights are under threat, and called for an appraisal of the last twenty years to address gaps and obstacles in governance. She also noted a lack of understanding of what a green economy means, and said many promises from 1992 remain unfulfilled.

**Asia-Pacific Regional Science and Technology Workshop (April 2011, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia):** The International Council for Science (ICSU) reported on this workshop, stating that countries should adopt approaches to achieve the green economy and poverty reduction. He proposed a sustainable development index with indicators for the three pillars. He urged that science and technology play a central role in any new IFSD.

**Third International Forum for Sustainable Asia and the Pacific (July 2011, Yokohama, Japan):** The Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) reported on key messages from the meeting in terms of achieving sustainable development, which were as follows: resilience is critical; green economy is an important "interim milestone"; and a better IFSD is a necessary condition for sustainable development.

**Asian Women's Forum on Gender Justice and Green Economy (September 2011, Bangkok, Thailand):** The Asian Women's Network on Gender and Development noted the meeting's special focus on water, energy and food security. She highlighted issues of gender mainstreaming and solidarity and urged a rights-based approach to development.

**Promoting a Transformative Agenda for Sustainable Development: Regional Conference on Development Models and Civil Society Organization Strategizing Session on Rio+20 (August 2011, Bangkok, Thailand):** IBON International urged an honest appraisal of the gaps in implementing existing commitments. He reported participants' concerns at the "corporatization" of the green economy agenda and urged steps to democratize ownership, control and decision-making over productive resources and assets. On IFSD, he supported a "strong apex body on sustainable development," with options including transforming the CSD into a Sustainable Development Council, or establishing a UN organization on sustainable development.

#### **STATEMENTS FROM MAJOR GROUPS AND**

**INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:** Women proposed reframing the "green economy" as "sustainable economies." She rejected current economic models pursued in the name of efficiency and growth, that she said are actually driven by greed. Instead, she urged a commitment to sustainable economies that are "gender-just," recognize women's contributions to economic production, and enable long-term social outcomes and wellbeing.

Children and Youth called on governments to develop national strategies for sustainable development; embed principles of sustainable development in education curricula; support youth-led projects and networks; promote youth employment rights; and end child labor by addressing the conditions leading to it. Regarding IFSD, they requested that youth be systematically included in all stages of implementation, with adequate resources and rights to access information.

Indigenous Peoples supported alternative measures of quantifying human wellbeing, noting that moves towards a green economy model and establishment of a Sustainable Development Council should be evaluated in light of their potential impact on indigenous people. She called for culture to be recognized as an additional essential pillar of sustainable development, and reaffirmed the importance of the Rio Principles, particularly those relating to access to justice and prior informed consent.

NGOs proposed that the green economy idea be replaced by a focus on sustainable "sufficiency" economies, noting that new labels should not obscure commitments to sustainable development. He also requested that a "strong apex body on sustainable development" be created that can integrate the work of multilateral bodies and monitor implementation of sustainable development.

Local Authorities requested a section on the green urban economy in any green economy document emerging from Rio+20, noting the rapid pace of urbanization in Asia and the crucial role of local authorities.

Workers and Trade Unions called for any agreement on Sustainable Development Goals to include a target on decent jobs by 2020 for at least half the world's workers, and for an institution or person to represent the rights of future generations. She supported a financial transactions tax to help fund sustainable development and social protection measures. She supported a UNEO, provided it has strong powers and authority.

Business and Industry called on governments to provide open trade and protection for intellectual property rights, implement a green economy in the context of globalized markets, and finalize negotiations on post-Kyoto arrangements, so that "markets will get the signal for going green."

The Scientific and Technological Community urged funding support for the transition to a green economy, with a focus on research and development. However, he also noted that changes in social values and practices are needed beyond technical solutions. On IFSD, he proposed that current institutional structures must cooperate and not compete.

Highlighting the key role of rural people in the region as the world's primary ecosystem managers, Farmers advocated placing rural welfare high on the agenda of future meetings and giving farmers a place in all decision making.

The Asian Development Bank said the region needs trillions of dollars of investment in new infrastructure, which presents an opportunity to build efficient and low carbon transport, clean energy, and integrated water management facilities for a green economy. He cited the region's valuable biodiversity and the need for incentive frameworks and elimination of perverse subsidies to conserve natural resources.

The UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction pointed out that disasters are an impediment to development and constrain green infrastructure and green jobs. He said that disasters are often avoidable through risk reduction, which has multiple benefits and integrates into a green economy.

### **OUTCOME OF THE MEETING**

The formal outcome of the meeting was the subject of considerable discussion. During the opening plenary session, participants discussed an eight-page draft text prepared by ESCAP and published on 18 October (EDD/UNCSD/RPM/WP.2). This draft text included sections on priority actions, green economy, IFSD and partnerships.

Several participants questioned what the precise outcome of the meeting would be. Noting that the draft text was entitled "Regional Statement," India, China, the Russian Federation and Pakistan preferred a Chair's summary rather than a joint statement from all delegates. However, Japan and the Republic of Korea emphasized the importance of sending a regional message to Rio+20, noting that there would be no other opportunity to do so. After informal discussions, the Secretariat clarified that the agenda item would refer to a meeting "Outcome" rather than a "Statement." Later on Wednesday, meeting Chair Yoon Jong-Soo indicated that the Bureau would reconvene in the evening and the following morning to work on the text and attempt to simplify it.

During these Bureau discussions, it became evident that it would be difficult to negotiate a detailed document on which all delegations could agree. As a result, the main outcome document was shortened significantly and kept at a more general level, focusing on broader principles and ideas and containing few specific proposals.

On Thursday afternoon, Chair Yoon Jong-Soo introduced a new outcome document entitled "Seoul Outcome of the Asia and Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting for UNCSD (Rio+20)." He explained that the draft was the result of lengthy discussions within the Bureau. He then invited comments.

Cambodia, Bhutan, the Philippines and New Zealand made textual suggestions. India said this was a carefully-balanced text and urged caution in opening up the document for negotiation, and China proposed waiting until the UNCSD PrepCom's "zero draft" was ready to discuss more detailed language or proposals.

Delegates then agreed that this text would be the regional outcome and to ask the ESCAP Secretariat to submit it to the UNCSD Secretariat as the outcome from the Asia and Pacific region.

Chair Yoon Jong-Soo then asked delegates to turn their attention to the more detailed Chair's summary of the meeting. He clarified that this document, which sought to capture more of the details of the discussions and various proposals, was not intended for adoption by the group, but was his summary of the discussions. He asked participants to submit any comments they may have as soon as possible.

The section below summarizes the agreed "Seoul Outcome" and the Chair's summary of the meeting.

**SEOUL OUTCOME:** The "Seoul Outcome of the Asia and Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting for UNCSD (Rio+20)" recognizes that the region is one of the most diverse regional groups, characterized by high economic growth rates while also being home to the largest number of the world's poor. The text recognizes the diverse range of states in the region. It reaffirms the principles in the Rio Declaration, Agenda 21 and instruments subsequently adopted for implementing Agenda 21, particularly the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. It recalls that the main aims of the UNCSD are to secure renewed political commitment for sustainable development, assess progress to date and the remaining gaps in implementation, and address new and emerging challenges. The document states that the outcome of the UNCSD should be based on the Rio Principles and should be action-oriented, forward-looking, consensus-based and inclusive.

The Seoul Outcome indicates that the green economy should be seen in the context of the overriding objectives of sustainable development and poverty eradication. It adds that the green economy should, *inter alia*:

- be one of the means to achieve sustainable development;
- facilitate trade opportunities for all countries, particularly developing countries;
- address the three pillars of sustainable development in a comprehensive, coordinated, synergistic and balanced manner;
- allow governments to pursue strategies based on national circumstances and stages of development;

- involve all stakeholders;
- facilitate technological innovation and transfer;
- address the challenges for SIDS, high mountain and land-locked states; and
- increase resilience to natural disasters.

The text further states that the green economy should not be used as a pretext for green protectionism.

On IFSD, the text notes the need to strengthen coherence, enhance implementation at all levels, strengthen governance of all three pillars, and enhance the role of the UN at all levels, including the regional and subregional levels.

**CHAIR'S SUMMARY:** The Chair's summary of the meeting provides a more detailed overview of the discussions. The introduction highlights several issues, including the region's diversity, and also refers to technology transfer, financing and the proposal to develop sustainable development goals. The summary contains three sections, on green economy, IFSD and partnerships.

**Green economy:** The Chair's summary recognizes that there is no consensus on the definition of the green economy, although some "common themes" have been identified. It notes that a green economy should be people-centered, focus on poverty reduction, be flexible in how it is applied, and recognize the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. The theme of "greening economies in the blue world" was also mentioned, particularly in the context of the Pacific and coastal communities. Implementation at all levels, including the community and individual level, is referenced. The Chair's summary also notes comments on the need for the green economy not to be used as a form of protectionism.

**IFSD:** This section reflects on a range of comments, including the need for better coordination within the UN, the role of the regional economic commissions and the international financial institutions. Options such as strengthening ECOSOC and/or establishing a Sustainable Development Council are noted. Furthermore, the section refers to UNEP's role in environmental governance. In this context, universal membership and predictable funding for UNEP are noted as important in the short term, while in the long-run a review of options for elevating its status to a global environmental organization is mentioned.

**Partnerships:** This section highlights the value of partnerships at all levels, with several regional partnerships noted, as well as a proposal for a "Global Partnership for Green Economy in the Context of Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction."

### CLOSING PLENARY

The closing plenary took place on Thursday afternoon, 20 October. Delegates approved the "Seoul Outcome" as the output of the meeting and Chair Yoon Jong-Soo introduced his Chair's summary of the meeting (see section above for more details). In addition, delegates adopted the report of the meeting following some minor oral corrections made by delegates.

UNCSD Secretary-General Sha Zukang reflected on the discussions over the past two days. On the green economy, he noted comments on the value of a roadmap and toolkit,

and on the Rio Principles, particularly that of common but differentiated responsibilities. He highlighted that integration of the three pillars of sustainable development was critical. He acknowledged concerns that a green economy could be used as a pretext for non-tariff barriers and reiterated the need for clear guidelines. Secretary-General Sha Zukang also noted comments on the option of creating sustainable development goals. On IFSD, he detected continued interest in simplifying the current governance structure, and support for strengthening UNEP as well as establishing a specialized agency on the environment. He detected strong support for a Sustainable Development Council based on the model of the Human Rights Council. Arguing that failure at Rio+20 is not an option, he noted that we have an "arduous" road ahead and that, although we are still collecting input, negotiations will begin soon.

Chair Yoon Jong-Soo said the Seoul Outcome will be a valuable input for Rio+20. He thanked the organizers and all participants for their contributions, and declared the meeting closed at 4:55 pm.

### UPCOMING MEETINGS

For additional meetings leading up to the Rio+20 conference, go to the UNCSD homepage <http://www.uncsd2012.org/> or IISD's Sustainable Development Policy and Practice knowledgebase <http://uncsd.iisd.org/>

**UNCSD Regional Preparatory Meeting for Africa:** The UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and partners are convening the African Regional Preparatory Meeting for the UNCSD. **dates:** 20-25 October 2011 **location:** Addis Ababa, Ethiopia **contact:** UNCSD Secretariat **email:** [uncsd2012@un.org](mailto:uncsd2012@un.org) **www:** [http://www.uneca.org/eca\\_programmes/sdd/events/Rio20/preparatory.asp](http://www.uneca.org/eca_programmes/sdd/events/Rio20/preparatory.asp)

**Second Expert Meeting on Trade Implications of the Green Economy:** The second Expert Meeting on Trade Implications of the Green Economy will be convened by UNCTAD. It will continue exploring ways a green economy, through trade-led growth, could become a pro-development income-generating instrument that will directly contribute to meeting the sustainable development imperative. The outcomes will serve as an input to the Rio+20 preparatory process. **dates:** 8-10 November 2011 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **contact:** Lucas Assunção **fax:** +41-22-917-0247 **email:** [lucas.assuncao@unctad.org](mailto:lucas.assuncao@unctad.org) **www:** <http://www.unctad.org/>

**Bonn 2011 Conference: The Water, Energy and Food Security Nexus: Solutions for the Green Economy:** Organized by the German Government, this conference pursues two objectives: to develop cross-sector solutions for achieving water, energy and food security; and to position the interface of water, energy and food security within the discourse of the Rio+20 process and green economy. **dates:** 16-18 November 2011 **location:** Bonn, Germany **contact:** Imke Thiem, Secretariat **phone:** +49-6196-79-1547 **email:** [bonn.conference2011@giz.de](mailto:bonn.conference2011@giz.de) **www:** <http://www.water-energy-food.org/>

**High-level Expert Meeting on the Sustainable Use of Oceans:** This meeting, to be hosted by Monaco, will take place in November. **dates:** 28-30 November 2011 **location:** Monaco **contact:** UNCSD Secretariat **email:** uncsd2012@un.org **www:** <http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/index.php?menu=50>

**UNCSD Regional Preparatory Meeting for the ECE Region:** The UN Economic Commission for Europe and partners will convene a regional meeting in preparation for the UNCSD. **dates:** 1-2 December 2011 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **contact:** UNCSD Secretariat **email:** uncsd2012@un.org **www:** <http://www.unece.org/env/SustainableDevelopment/RPM2011/RPM2011.html>

**Eye on Earth Summit:** The Eye on Earth Summit: Pursuing a Vision is being organized under the theme "Dynamic system to keep the world environmental situation under review." This event will launch the global environmental information network (EIN) strengthening initiative and address major policy and technical issues. **dates:** 12-15 December 2011 **location:** Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates **contact:** Marije Heurter, Eye on Earth Event Coordinator **tel:** +971 2 693 4516 **email:** [marije.heurter@ead.ae](mailto:marije.heurter@ead.ae) or [Eoecommunity@ead.ae](mailto:Eoecommunity@ead.ae) **www:** <http://www.eyeonearthsummit.org/>

**Second Intersessional Meeting for UNCSD:** The second intersessional meeting for the UNCSD will be convened in late 2011. **dates:** 15-16 December 2011 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UNCSD Secretariat **email:** uncsd2012@un.org **www:** <http://www.uncsd2012.org/>

**UNCSD Informal Consultations:** The UNCSD Preparatory Committee will hold a series of information consultations on the zero draft of the outcome document in January, February, March and April 2012. **dates:** 16-18 January 2012; 13-17 February 2012; 19-23 March 2012 and 30 April - 4 May 2012 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UNCSD Secretariat **email:** uncsd2012@un.org **www:** <http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/>

**12th Special Session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum:** The Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) will hold its 12th special session to focus on the UNCSD themes of green economy and international environmental governance and emerging issues. **dates:** 20-22 February 2012 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **contact:** Jamil Ahmad, UNEP **phone:** +254-20-762-3411 **fax:** +254-20 762-3929 **email:** [sgc.sgb@unep.org](mailto:sgc.sgb@unep.org) **www:** <http://www.unep.org/resources/gov/>

**Planet Under Pressure: New Knowledge toward Solutions:** This conference will focus on solutions to the global sustainability challenge. The conference will discuss solutions to move societies on to a sustainable pathway and provide scientific leadership towards the UNCSD. **dates:** 26-29 March 2012 **location:** London, United Kingdom **contact:** Jenny Wang **phone:** +86-10-8520-8796 **email:** [Jen.wang@elsevier.com](mailto:Jen.wang@elsevier.com) **www:** <http://www.planetunderpressure2012.net>

**Third Intersessional Meeting for UNCSD:** The final intersessional meeting for the UNCSD will be convened in March 2012. **dates:** 26-27 March 2012 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UNCSD Secretariat **email:** uncsd2012@un.org **www:** <http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/>

**Third PrepCom for UNCSD:** The third meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the UNCSD will take place in Brazil just prior to the conference. **dates:** 28-30 May 2012 **location:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazil **contact:** UNCSD Secretariat **email:** uncsd2012@un.org **www:** <http://www.uncsd2012.org/>

**UN Conference on Sustainable Development:** The UNCSD will mark the 20th anniversary of the UN Conference on Environment and Development, which convened in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. **dates:** 4-6 June 2012 **location:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazil **contact:** UNCSD Secretariat **email:** uncsd2012@un.org **www:** <http://www.uncsd2012.org/>

## GLOSSARY

CSD	UN Commission on Sustainable Development
ECOSOC	UN Economic and Social Council
ESCAP	UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
IEG	International environmental governance
IFSD	Institutional framework for sustainable development
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
Rio+20	UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD)
SIDS	Small island developing states
UNCED	UN Conference on Environment and Development
UNCSD	UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20)
UNEP	UN Environment Programme
UNEO	UN Environment Organization
UNGA	UN General Assembly
WEO	World Environment Organization