

## SUMMARY OF THE UNCSO INFORMAL INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS AND THIRD INTERSESSIONAL MEETING: 19-27 MARCH 2012

Delegates resumed their discussions on the outcome document for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSO or Rio+20) during back-to-back meetings from 19-27 March 2012 at UN Headquarters in New York. The first “informal informal” consultations to negotiate the draft outcome document took place from 19-23 March, followed by the Third Intersessional Meeting, which took place from 26-27 March.

Negotiations were based on the “zero draft,” which was developed by the Co-Chairs and Bureau of the UNCSO Preparatory Committee. Titled “The Future We Want,” the document was released on 10 January 2012. The draft incorporated the input received by the UNCSO Secretariat from member states and other stakeholders by 1 November 2011 (referred to as the “compilation document”) as well as comments offered during a 15-16 December 2011 Second Intersessional Meeting of the UNCSO. The first and second readings of the first two sections of the zero draft (the Preamble/Stage Setting and Renewing Political Commitment Sections) were conducted during a three-day session in January. Written comments on the remaining three sections—Green Economy in the Context of Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication, Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development, and Framework for Action and Follow-up—were submitted and compiled by the Secretariat into a draft that was used for negotiations during the March UNCSO meetings.

During the March meetings, delegations discussed additional amendments and responded to other delegations’ amendments on most of the text. The first reading of the sections on the green economy, institutional framework and framework for action took place during the week-long informal informal consultations. A second reading of these three sections, along with a third reading of the Preamble and most of the Renewing Political Commitment sections, was conducted during the two-day intersessional meeting.

While Major Group representatives and some delegations bemoaned the large number of brackets placed around various textual amendments, many noted that the real decisions on

whether specific text will remain in the outcome document and in what format it will appear will begin during the next round of informal informal consultations. Others anticipated that the delegations at the next meeting, from 23 April - 4 May, would use the information they gained from the March discussion of positions (and, perhaps more importantly, from the behind the scenes consultations to consolidate the positions of negotiating blocs), to begin to reach agreement on what the Rio+20 outcome document will bring to the evolution of the global approach to sustainable development policy.

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCES

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development will mark the 40th anniversary of the first major international political conference that specifically had the word “environment” in its title. The UNCSO 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 conference will focus on the following themes: a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and the institutional framework for sustainable development (IFSD).

#### IN THIS ISSUE

A Brief History of UN Sustainable Development Conferences .....	1
Report of the Meeting .....	3
Draft Outcome Document for UNCSO .....	4
A Brief Analysis of the Meeting .....	11
Upcoming Meetings .....	12
Glossary .....	14

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

**BRUNDTLAND COMMISSION:** In 1983, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) established an independent commission to formulate a long-term agenda for action. The World Commission on Environment and Development—more commonly known as the Brundtland Commission, named for its Chair, Gro Harlem Brundtland—subsequently issued, in 1987, *Our Common Future*, which 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 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 the UN Economic and Social Council (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 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. It assessed progress since UNCED and examined implementation.

**WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:** The 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 countries. Delegates negotiated and adopted 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. 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.

**UNGA 64:** On 24 December 2009, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 64/236 and agreed to convene the UNCS D in 2012 in Brazil. Resolution 64/236 also called for holding three Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) meetings prior to the UNCS D. 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.

**UNCS D PREPCOM I:** This meeting was held from 17-19 May 2010, at UN Headquarters in New York. The PrepCom assessed progress to date and the remaining gaps in implementing outcomes of major summits on sustainable development, as well as new and emerging challenges, a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and the IFSD. Participants also organized their work in the lead-up to 2012, and considered the UNCS D’s rules of procedure.

**FIRST INTERSESSIONAL MEETING:** This meeting convened from 10-11 January 2011, at UN Headquarters in New York. Delegates listened to a summary of the findings of the Synthesis Report on securing renewed political commitment for sustainable development. Panel discussions were held on the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and on the IFSD.

**UNCS D PREPCOM II:** This meeting 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 on the process for preparing the draft outcome document for the UNCS D.

**UNCS D SUBREGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETINGS FOR SIDS:** Three subregional preparatory meetings were convened to allow small island developing states (SIDS) the opportunity to prepare inputs into the UNCS D preparatory process. The Subregional Preparatory Meeting for the Caribbean convened in Georgetown, Guyana, on 20 June 2011. The Subregional Preparatory Committee for the Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean, and South China Sea (AIMS) countries, convened in Mahé, Seychelles, from 7-8 July 2011. The Pacific Subregional Preparatory Joint Ministerial Meeting convened in Apia, Samoa, from 21-22 July 2011.

**UNCS D REGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETINGS:** The UN regional economic and social commissions organized preparatory meetings for the UN regions between September and December 2011.

The **Regional Preparatory Meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean** convened in Santiago, Chile, from 7-9 September 2011. The main outcome of this meeting included calls for 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. Delegates also discussed a proposal from Colombia and Guatemala to launch a process to develop sustainable development goals (SDGs).

The **Arab Regional Preparatory Meeting** took place from 16-17 October 2011, in Cairo, Egypt. Delegates highlighted the lack of a universal definition of green economy and agreed that it should be a tool for sustainable development rather than a new principle that might replace sustainable development. Some said they could not discuss the international options for the IFSD until the proposals and their financial implications are clear. Participants also highlighted the need for balance among the three pillars of sustainable development.

The **Regional Preparatory Meeting for Asia and the Pacific** took place from 19-20 October 2011, in Seoul, Republic of Korea. Although many found merit in the idea of a green economy, some noted that it should not lead to protectionism or conditionalities. On IFSD, while many favored “strengthening” UNEP, there was no consensus on whether this should be done through transforming UNEP into a specialized agency. Some participants also expressed interest and support for establishing a sustainable development council.

The **Regional Preparatory Meeting for Africa** took place from 20-25 October 2011, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. On IFSD, while there was some opposition to the idea of transforming UNEP into a specialized agency, all participants agreed on the need to strengthen the programme. Delegates supported the concept of a green economy while indicating that it needs more definition, should not result in protectionism or trade conditionalities, and should include the concept of sustainable land management. On means of implementation, delegates committed to a number of objectives, including ensuring improved environmental governance, transparency and accountability. They also called on the international community to meet existing commitments, such as the need to double aid to Africa.

The **Regional Preparatory Meeting for Europe and North America** convened in Geneva, Switzerland, from 1-2 December 2011. Participants called for improvement in monitoring and evaluation of progress on sustainable development, better integration of the three pillars of sustainable development, and stronger regional cooperation. They discussed the proposal for SDGs and supported a green economy roadmap, while acknowledging different views and the need to accommodate the unique challenges of different countries. On IFSD, many supported upgrading and transforming UNEP, creating a sustainable development council, strengthening the regional commissions and national sustainable development councils, and engaging civil society. There was both support for and opposition to proposals for a new international convention elaborating Rio Principle 10 on access to information and public participation.

**SECOND INTERSESSIONAL MEETING:** This meeting convened from 15-16 December 2011 at UN Headquarters in New York. Participants discussed the compilation of submissions from states, UN bodies, intergovernmental organizations and Major Groups, and provided comments and guidance for the development, structure and format of a “zero draft” of the outcome document to be adopted at the UNCSD in June 2012.

**INITIAL DISCUSSIONS OF THE ZERO DRAFT:** This meeting took place at UN Headquarters in New York from 25-27 January 2012. In their opening statements, delegates agreed that the zero draft would serve as the basis for negotiations. They had submitted written comments on the first two sections of the zero draft—the Preamble/Stage Setting and Renewing Political Commitment Sections—prior to the January discussions, and began negotiations on these sections.

## REPORT OF THE MEETING

On Monday, 19 March 2012, the UNCSD Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) Co-Chair Kim Sook (Republic of Korea) opened the informal consultations and asked delegates to be flexible and remain focused. He also informed delegates that they should expect to work during evening and weekend sessions.

UNCSD Secretary-General Sha Zukang emphasized that the UNCSD is “a conference of implementation.” On green economy, he noted convergence on: addressing the social agenda; respecting country ownership; and avoiding protectionism and aid conditionalities. He highlighted that delegations have raised questions regarding: terms of technology sharing, who should bear the incremental costs of transition, and how major investments can be financed. On the institutional framework for sustainable development (IFSD), he noted that delegates have converged on the importance of strengthening links between science and policymaking, as well as on the idea that the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) should not continue in its current format. He noted that differences exist regarding whether and how to enhance the role of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), whether to create a sustainable development council (SDC), and whether to transform UNEP into a specialized agency. He also identified an emerging scope of aspirational goals or targets covering a range of issues, including food security, energy, water, land degradation, a social protection floor, decent work, disaster risk reduction, oceans and sustainable urban planning.

Algeria, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China (G-77/China), indicated that, while his Group had labored throughout the weekend to complete their joint submission regarding Section III (Green Economy in the Context of Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication), all capitals had not yet signed off on the Group’s position. Therefore, he requested that the morning session begin with a consideration of the first two sections of the draft outcome (Preamble/Stage Setting and Renewing Political Commitment). Delegates then proceeded to conduct a third reading of several paragraphs in the first section on Monday morning, and then turned to the first reading of Sections III-V on Monday afternoon. Following full day and evening sessions throughout the first week, the informal consultations concluded the first reading of the zero draft at 11:15 pm on Friday, 23 March.

The G-77/China presented its position as a single bloc throughout meeting, with various issue-specific spokespeople presenting the position. During the first week, these spokespeople focused on presenting the G-77/China’s proposed amendments to the zero draft, while parallel consultations among members consolidated the Group’s position on all amendments to

the draft. During the two-day Intersessional meeting, the G-77/China spokespeople presented the Group's position on other delegations' amendments.

**THIRD INTERSESSIONAL MEETING:** On Monday, 26 March 2012, Co-Chair Kim opened the Third Intersessional Meeting of the UNCSD. He said that, based on a decision of the Bureau, the Intersessional would not consider the approval of the rules of procedure and the participation of intergovernmental organizations in the PrepCom, but would instead continue with informal negotiations. He invited the G-77/China to present its amendments to other delegations' proposals. He also proposed that all delegations go through the first two sections of the zero draft before working on the whole text in two working groups: Working Group I for Sections I (Preamble/Stage Setting), II (Renewing Political Commitment) and IV (Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development), and Working Group II for Sections III (Green Economy in the Context of Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication) and V (Framework for Action and Follow-up).

Palestine intervened saying that, according to UN General Assembly Resolution 64/236, which established the Conference, there is a need for all member states, and members of specialized agencies, to approve the rules of procedure. Co-Chair Kim indicated that, because this meeting was an informal meeting, there was no need to go through the rules of procedure process, and the Bureau had decided to dedicate the two days to negotiations.

The European Union (EU) said a streamlining exercise should be done to reduce the size of the text. He reserved on proceeding with two working groups for the Intersessional, but said the EU would agree if the Co-Chairs would, *inter alia*, provide guidance on the type of language to use to streamline the text.

On Tuesday morning, 27 March, the EU welcomed the meeting between the Major Groups and the Bureau that had taken place from 9:00-10:00 am that morning. He suggested that future meetings of this nature should be extended in time, focused in topic, and allow members of delegations to respond to Major Groups' concerns. The EU also expressed concern about the negotiation process, saying that details in the zero draft are deleted or added without much explanation. The G-77/China replied that detailed rationales will be provided at a further stage of negotiations.

**CLOSING STATEMENTS:** During closing statements on Tuesday afternoon, 27 March, Co-Chair John Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda) announced that the Bureau decided at a mid-day meeting that the Co-Chairs would develop suggestions for streamlined text and add it to the document with the compilation of all amendments to the zero draft, and would not replace any of the contributions made by delegations. He explained that countries could offer their own suggestions for changes to the Co-Chairs' suggestions, and revisions of the suggestions would be made available to all delegations prior to the April-May informal consultations. Delegates were also invited to submit their proposed amendments to paragraphs 16-24 (the final part of Section II for which they had not finished the third reading) by close of business on 28 March 2012.

The G-77/China said his Group was holding consultations on this proposal and requested a short recess. The session was suspended at 5:50 pm and resumed at 7:12 pm, at which point

the G-77/China said the Co-Chairs should make available to all delegations the compilation text as it stood at 7:00 pm on 27 March 2012, as well as a second text with all of the further amendments proposed between then and close-of-business on 28 March 2012, and that each draft should be date and time stamped. He also said the Group wanted negotiations to resume on 23 April on the basis of the compilation text as it stood with proposals received from delegations by 28 March, and that between now and 23 April, the door of the G-77/China's office would be open to the Co-Chairs to discuss how the compilation text might be streamlined or reorganized. Iceland also indicated his Mission's door is open to the Co-Chairs.

In his closing statement, UNCSD Secretary-General Sha Zukang, thanked the Co-Chairs and the delegates for their hard work. He said "these seven days of hard work have laid the foundation for consensus" and expressed his appreciation for delegations' positive approach to trying to understand the different positions. He noted that the negotiations to come will be complex and arduous, the text is long, and the days for negotiations are limited. He underlined that the UNGA called for a focused political document and said that many argue that the document should build on earlier achievements, should not merely be a repetition of Agenda 21 or other treaties or agreed outcomes, and should focus on actions and concrete steps. He called on participants to seize this moment, which he said calls for a sense of history and a vision for our future.

Co-Chair Ashe said the Co-Chairs stand ready to assist delegations and asked delegates to be ready for intense negotiations during the informal consultations in April. He adjourned the meeting at 7:28 pm.

#### **DRAFT OUTCOME DOCUMENT FOR UNCSD**

The summary of the draft outcome document below follows the structure of the zero draft. Each section contains a brief review of the contents of the zero draft, followed by a summary of the range of proposals that delegates offered for each section. The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* daily issues from this meeting offer a more detailed review of the deliberations and can be found online at <http://www.iisd.ca/uncsd/ism3/>. This summary is based on the state of the text at the conclusion of the discussions on Tuesday, 27 March 2012. The number of proposed paragraphs noted for each section includes paragraphs that were offered as alternatives as well as proposals for additional stand-alone text.

**I. PREAMBLE/STAGE SETTING:** This section seeks to set out the shared vision of governments attending the UNCSD. The zero draft contained five paragraphs, addressing: the Rio+20 participants' resolve to work together; the shared "determination to free humanity from hunger and want;" the participants' resolve to accelerate efforts to achieve internationally agreed development goals; enhancing cooperation and addressing the ongoing and emerging issues; and urging "bold and decisive action on the objective and themes for the conference."

As of 27 March 2012, approximately 18 paragraphs had been proposed for this section of the draft outcome document. During the discussion on Tuesday, 27 March, on action on the objectives and themes of Rio+20, the EU, Switzerland, Belarus and Iceland supported a Liechtenstein amendment to "commit to take" bold and decisive action. On the Russian Federation's proposed amendment calling for "setting the ground for new universal and comprehensive ethics of the humanity," the Holy See proposed

an alternative: “recognizing the indispensable role of ethics in sustainable development.” Switzerland, supported by Norway and Serbia, welcomed an EU amendment on mainstreaming biodiversity and ecosystem services, but suggested moving it to a different place in the document. Switzerland, Norway and Australia supported the EU proposal for an additional paragraph recognizing that the cost of inaction far outweighs the cost of action.

Additional proposals in this section include the following: recalling “that the right to development is an inalienable human right” (Liechtenstein); declaring “that achieving sustainable development requires changes in production and consumption patterns” (Mexico); and reaffirming that the objective of the Conference “is to secure renewed political commitment for sustainable development, assessing the progress to date and the remaining gaps in the implementation...” and expressing “willingness to address the two themes of the Conference: the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication and the International Framework for Sustainable Development” (G-77/China).

**II. RENEWING POLITICAL COMMITMENT:** This section recalls previous commitments and sets the stage for further action. The zero draft of this section contained 19 paragraphs, organized in four subsections. It reaffirms the principles of the first Rio conference and related summits and action plans; assesses progress against the outcomes of major summits on sustainable development and identifies new and emerging challenges; sets out proposals for engaging major groups; and outlines a framework of possible action. As of 27 March 2012, approximately 76 paragraphs had been proposed for this section of the document.

**A. Reaffirming Rio Principles and Past Action Plans:** This subsection reaffirms the UN Charter and a number of summit documents, including the Rio Declaration, Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, and the Barbados Programme of Action. It recognizes the need to reinforce sustainable development globally “in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and the principle of the sovereign right of states over their natural resources.”

During the negotiations, a number of proposals were discussed. On reaffirming the UN Charter, Switzerland proposed text that reaffirms commitment to the Stockholm Declaration on the Human Environment principles, in addition to the Rio Principles. Norway, Mexico and the EU proposed reference to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other instruments.

On reaffirming commitment to past agreements, Australia, supported by Japan, proposed to include reference to the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disaster. New Zealand supported a G-77/China proposal reaffirming commitment to the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean and its resources. The EU proposed to mention the International Conference on Population and Development. With reference to states’ sovereign rights over their natural resources, the EU proposed adding “without causing damage to the environment of other States or of areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction.” On collective efforts, Mexico proposed mentioning sustainable urbanization.

**B. 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 (Integration, Implementation, Coherence):** This subsection of the zero draft acknowledges successes, setbacks and challenges, and recognizing gaps in implementation of sustainable development commitments.

Discussions covered various proposals. On progress and change since the 1992 Earth Summit, the G-77/China preferred that the negotiations be based on its proposal, which mentions an increasing gap between developed and developing countries, and points to a need for international cooperation in finance and technology transfer, and for avoiding backtracking.

On setbacks and challenges, the G-77/China said it could support the EU reference to unsustainable consumption and production if “in developed countries” is added. New Zealand proposed moving the EU amendment on population dynamics to Section V. The EU added a reference to “nutrition” insecurity and said it did not support a reference to subsidies that contribute to fishing overcapacity.

On national commitment to sustainable development, Switzerland stressed “coherence between social, environmental and economic policies so as they correspond with sustainable development remains a challenge.”

On proposed insertion of unemployment and under-employment by the US and New Zealand, the US proposed changing a G-77/China reference to a “global strategy on youth employment” to a reference to the “need for sustainable development strategies to proactively address youth employment.”

On efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger, the G-77/China proposed text calling for measures to remove obstacles to the realization of the right of peoples to self-determination, in particular peoples living under colonial and foreign occupation, stating that this was agreed language from the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. The US proposed deleting this text.

The US proposed that a reference on empowering women to make informed decisions about their reproductive health include a reference to “safe, affordable and effective measures of modern contraceptives.”

Japan supported a proposal of the G-77/China reaffirming that human beings are at the center of concerns for human development, stressing the importance of putting human security in the context of sustainable development. Japan also modified part of this G-77/China proposal with text highlighting the importance of universal health coverage as a fundamental instrument in enhancing, *inter alia*, health, social equity and economic development.

On special challenges facing certain groups of countries, the G-77/China wished to use its proposed alternate paragraph since it listed all the groups concerning its members, and insisted that any references to aid effectiveness be accompanied by references to developed countries not meeting the official development assistance (ODA) commitment of 0.7% of GNP. Serbia asked for guidance on how countries are classified for various categories. Kazakhstan welcomed the Swiss proposed insertion on “mountainous developing countries,” which the EU opposed. The EU reiterated its support for holding the next SIDS conference in 2016.

**C. Engaging Major Groups:** This subsection of the zero draft addresses: public participation in decision-making; access to information and use of information and communication technologies; the roles of the private sector and local governments; and participation of indigenous peoples, children and youth.

Proposals discussed during the negotiations included different elements. On public participation, the G-77/China and Montenegro inserted references to Rio Principle 10 on access to information. The G-77/China related participation in the promotion of sustainable development, and proposed deleting the reference to decision-making.

Montenegro proposed text acknowledging the role of parliaments, inviting them to become more actively involved in sustainable development, including reviewing progress of implementation.

On civil society, the G-77/China introduced text on the need for technology transfer to reduce the global information technology gap. The EU proposed text on freedom of association and assembly, and a paragraph on gender equality and empowerment of women, including on increased representation and participation.

On the role of the private sector, Norway introduced text on policies to ensure reflection of social and environmental costs and benefits in prices and decisions. The EU proposed a paragraph calling on the private sector to seek opportunities from the green economy, and committing to ensure a predictable and enabling regulatory framework.

On local government, the G-77/China proposed affirming the “primary role” of national governments. Serbia suggested a paragraph on strengthening the science-policy interface. The Republic of Korea acknowledged international organizations as “a nodal point of global governance” promoting the three pillars of sustainable development in a balanced manner.

On indigenous people, children and youth, New Zealand proposed inserting a reference to persons with disabilities. The EU proposed text on the participation of young people, as the issues would have a “deep impact...on them and the generations that follow.” The G-77/China proposed a paragraph on the participation of workers and trade unions, in relation to social equity and decent work.

**D. Framework for Action:** This section of the zero draft calls for: committing to improving governance and capacity; reinvigorating the global partnership for sustainable development; and calling for a global policy framework applying to large companies to consider and report on sustainability.

Delegates discussed a certain number of proposals. The G-77/China proposed preambular paragraphs, later suggesting moving them to Section V, including a statement that “member states are primarily responsible for driving their own sustainable development agenda,” and noting the role of regional and subregional organizations. The paragraphs referred to “new, additional, predictable, and adequate financial resources, grants, credits and investment,” and provision of a registry of transfers for the implementation of sustainable development commitments.

On good governance, Norway suggested stressing the importance of better cooperation and coherence between the UN, international financial institutions (IFIs) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). The G-77/China reiterated the importance

of transparency in the financial, monetary and trading systems. On a global policy framework, Switzerland proposed building on the global compact and global reporting initiative.

### III. GREEN ECONOMY IN THE CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY ERADICATION:

This section aims to: frame the context, address the challenges and opportunities related to a green economy; recognize the need for policy options, tools and experience sharing to help countries move towards a green economy; and outline a framework for action. The zero draft comprised three subsections and 19 paragraphs. As of 27 March 2012, more than 80 paragraphs had been proposed for this section.

#### A. Framing the Context of the Green Economy, Challenges and Opportunities:

The zero draft for this subsection covers elements related to: the contribution of a green economy to meeting key goals and the need for a green economy to be based on Rio Principles; green economy as a means to achieve sustainable development; green economy as a decision-making framework (and not as a rigid set of rules); respecting countries’ realities, conditions and priorities; green economy’s win-win opportunities; structural adjustments and need for international community support; and what international efforts must not do in order to help countries build a green economy.

During the negotiations, proposals discussed included:

- reforming the global financial system and architecture (G-77/China);
- promoting sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth that generates employment and strengthens social cohesion (Liechtenstein);
- promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns (EU);
- changing unsustainable consumption and production patterns (G-77/China);
- developing human capacity, improving knowledge of trends and developments in jobs in sectors supporting green growth (New Zealand);
- integrating relevant data into national economic statistics (New Zealand);
- underpinning the green economy by an improved science-policy interface (Liechtenstein);
- the proper recognition of the social and economic values of natural capital, and an enhancement of the way in which we measure and evaluate growth and progress (EU);
- making sustainable choices more easily available, affordable and attractive to consumers by setting or supporting efforts to develop sustainable product standards (Norway, Canada) and by applying price incentives and disincentives (Norway);
- integrating social and environmental costs in how the world prices and measures economic activities (Norway); and
- better understanding the social, environmental and economic implications and impacts of green economy (G-77/China).

**B. Toolkits and Experience Sharing:** The zero draft for this subsection calls on: the need for a mix of policies and measures tailored to each country’s needs and preferences; the creation of an international knowledge-sharing platform; the UN Secretary-General (SG) to establish this platform; member states to make national presentations on their experiences; and Major Groups experience-sharing.

Delegates' proposals during the negotiations covered, *inter alia*:

- green professional training and development of green skills (Israel);
- the development of data platforms with environmental, economic, and social data (US);
- exchange of sustainable development experiences and knowledge in the priorities areas of developing countries (G-77);
- creation or strengthening of international knowledge sharing platforms that enable countries, civil society, and the private sector to share policy options, best practices and indicators relevant to the regional, national and local levels (US);
- a capacity development scheme to, *inter alia*, provide country-specific advice on legal, economic and other instruments and policies to assist them in accessing available funds (EU);
- a global green economy partnership to facilitate the transition towards green economy and support capacity building in developing countries with the participation of governments, civil society, the private sector and relevant international organizations (Republic of Korea);
- a set of models or good examples of green economy strategies (Japan);
- a set of methodologies for policy evaluation (EU); and
- a mechanism to identify social and economic transition costs as well as possible solutions (Mexico).

**C. Framework for Action:** The zero draft for this subsection contains paragraphs on: differentiated strategies tailored to the needs of different countries and sectors; transparency in the development of green economy strategies; support needed from the United Nations and other international organizations in supporting developing countries in developing these strategies; encouraging business and industry to develop green economy roadmaps; voluntary national commitments and actions; the need for supporting developing countries through, *inter alia*, new, additional and scaled-up sources of financing, eliminating environmentally harmful subsidies, facilitating international collaborative research on green technologies, and establishing a capacity development scheme; and a roadmap with indicative goals and a timeline to measure global progress and a request to the SG to report to the UNGA on further steps in this regard.

During the negotiations, the G-77/China proposed moving this text to Section V, to consolidate all text related to frameworks for action. Additional proposals included:

- integrating green economy measures into national sustainable development strategies (EU);
- recognizing that each country should have the flexibility of adopting its own policies and measures in accordance with its own national priorities and circumstances (G-77/China);
- inserting green growth and sustainable development policies into IFIs and other relevant organizations' cooperation processes and country-support structural agendas (Mexico);
- encouraging new public-private partnerships with the financial sector in order to capitalize substantial additional financing for implementing a green economy (Switzerland);
- promoting the systematic application of sustainable public procurement (EU);

- establishing a comprehensive, harmonized and easy to access core set of indicators and measures to evaluate implementation (EU); and
- rationalizing and phasing out of environmentally or economically harmful subsidies (EU).

#### IV. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:** This section of the outcome document seeks to set out the vision of what the framework should be for international governance on sustainable development, particularly within the UN system. The zero draft contained 18 paragraphs, grouped into four subsections: strengthening/reforming/integrating the three pillars; the UNGA, ECOSOC, Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), Sustainable Development Council (SDC) proposal; UN Environment Programme (UNEP), specialized agency on environment proposal, IFIs, United Nations operational activities at the country level; and regional, national, local. As of the conclusion of discussions on 27 March 2012, approximately 120 paragraphs and subparagraphs had been proposed, as well as proposals for title changes.

##### A. Strengthening/Reforming/Integrating the Three Pillars:

The zero draft text for this subsection suggests four foci for the strengthening and reform of the institutional framework: integrating the three pillars of sustainable development and promoting the implementation of Agenda 21 and related outcomes; providing cohesive, government-driven policy guidance on sustainable development and identifying specific actions to fulfill the sustainable development agenda; monitoring progress in implementing Agenda 21 and relevant outcomes; and reinforcing coherence among the agencies, funds and programmes of the UN system, the IFIs and trade institutions.

Regarding integrating the three pillars and implementation of Agenda 21, proposals were offered on: affirming a commitment to construct a new international economic order (NIEO) that is more fair, equitable and inclusive (G-77/China); strengthening the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy and Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (G-77/China); and broadened and deepened opportunities for active participation of all stakeholders (EU).

On monitoring progress in implementing Agenda 21, proposals were offered on: identifying weaknesses or gaps that affect full implementation of Agenda 21 (G-77/China); implementing commitments related to Africa's development needs (G-77/China); voluntary peer reviews (EU); and assessment of policy impact (Switzerland).

On coherence among the UN system entities, IFIs and trade institutions, proposals were offered on: addressing fragmentation, overlap, competition and conflicting agendas among UN agencies, funds and programmes (G-77/China); striking a balance in UN regular budget allocations (G-77/China); and implementation of a UN-wide strategy for sustainable development to ensure greater coherence in the UN system (Norway).

**B. GA, ECOSOC, CSD, SDC Proposal:** The zero draft text for this subsection calls on the UNGA to further integrate sustainable development as a key element of the overarching framework for UN activities; reaffirms ECOSOC's traditional roles, while agreeing to promote its role in integrating the

three pillars by making better use of its current segments; and offers options to either reform the CSD or transform it into an SDC, and, if the latter, lays out a UNGA process to establish its mandate, modalities, functions, size, membership, working methods and procedures.

The text includes several proposals regarding reforming ECOSOC and transforming the CSD into a SDC, and on the functioning of an SDC, including ensuring full involvement of UN agencies and bodies as well as that of IFIs, the use of a review mechanism of countries' sustainable development performance, and a strong science-policy interface. Other proposals include: having the SG convene periodic high-level exchanges on sustainable development during the UNGA opening session (Switzerland); having the SG submit proposals to UNGA to give effect to proposed reforms (EU); creating a new Ministerial Forum that would report to ECOSOC (Cuba); a step-by-step approach to strengthen international environmental governance (Japan); and an international technology transfer mechanism under the UNGA (G-77/China).

**C. UNEP, Specialized Agency on Environment Proposal, IFIs, United Nations Operational Activities at Country Level:**

The zero draft text for this subsection includes provisions to: provide options for strengthening UNEP, either by establishing universal membership for its Governing Council and significantly increasing its financial base, or by transforming it into a Specialized Agency; stress the need for a regular review of the state of the planet and the Earth's carrying capacity; call for the scientific basis for decision-making to be strengthened across the UN system; recognize that sustainable development must be given due consideration by IFIs, regional development banks, UNCTAD and the WTO; call for further measures to enhance coordination and cooperation among MEAs; emphasize the need to strengthen operational activities for sustainable development; agree to further consider the establishment of an Ombudsperson or High Commissioner for Future Generations; and agree to take steps to give further effect to Rio Principle 10 at the global, regional and national levels, as appropriate.

Proposals were presented regarding:

- universal membership in UNEP and transforming its Governing Council into an Executive Board (Norway);
- transforming UNEP into a World Environment Organization that would elaborate a "World Environmental Constitution" (Ukraine);
- IMF/World Bank quota realignments and voting power parity (G-77/China);
- further synergies within the chemicals and waste cluster, and similar efforts in the biodiversity cluster (Switzerland); and
- the UN becoming a model of best practice and transformation by setting an example of sustainability (New Zealand).

**D. Regional, National, Local:** Here the zero draft has provisions to: reaffirm the role of sustainable development strategies incorporated into national development plans; call for strengthening existing regional and subregional mechanisms in promoting sustainable development; underline the need for more coherent and integrated planning and decision-making at the national level; and recognize the need to integrate urban development policy into national sustainable development policy.

Additional proposals were made on: prioritizing monitoring and assessment of data to guide development decision-making (US); promoting "enhanced access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to judicial and administrative procedures in environmental matters" (EU) and referencing the inter-regional Green Bridge initiative (Kazakhstan).

**V. FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION AND FOLLOW-UP:**

As presented in the zero draft, this section includes three subsections: priority/key/thematic/cross-sectoral issues and areas; accelerating and measuring progress; and means of implementation. The zero draft included 65 paragraphs. The priority issues were identified as: food security; water; energy; cities; green jobs-social inclusion; oceans and seas, SIDS; natural disasters; climate change; forests and biodiversity; land degradation and desertification; mountains; chemicals and waste; sustainable consumption and production; education; and gender equality. On accelerating and measuring progress, the zero draft proposed launching an inclusive process to devise, by 2015, a set of global sustainable development goals. The section on means of implementation has subsections on finance, science and technology, capacity building, trade, and a registry/compendium of commitments.

As of 27 March 2012, approximately 400 additional paragraphs had been proposed for this section of the draft outcome document. Proposed introductory text for this section indicates that progress in implementation requires, *inter alia*, "efficient linkage among the three pillars of sustainable development and due means of implementation" (G-77/China), "results-driven initiatives and partnerships" (EU), and "platforms to share information, knowledge, and commitments" (US).

**A. Priority/Key/Thematic/Cross-Sectoral Issues and Areas:** Proposals for additional sections in the text on thematic/cross-sectoral issues include:

- eradication of poverty (G-77/China);
- sustainable tourism (G-77/China);
- sustainable transportation (G-77/China);
- harmony with nature (G-77/China);
- population (EU);
- health (Switzerland and Norway);
- infrastructure (New Zealand);
- Least Developed Countries (G-77/China);
- land-locked developing countries (G-77/China);
- Africa (G-77/China);
- family (Holy See);
- private sector (EU);
- sustainable innovation and investment (EU);
- correct price signals (EU); and
- mining (Australia).

Proposals were also made to separate the text related to "oceans and seas, SIDS" and "forests and biodiversity" into two sections each.

In the proposed section on poverty eradication, the G-77/China called for commitment to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015 (G-77/China).

In the section on food security, proposals included: reaffirming that the right to development, and the right to food and proper nutrition should be fulfilled (G-77/China); prioritizing increasing sustainable food production and productivity (EU);

and reaffirming the need to eliminate barriers and policies that distort production and trade in agricultural products (G-77/China).

On water, proposals called for encouraging the SG Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation to start considering new goals for priority areas for water resources management after 2013 (Japan), and recognizing the importance of large scale investments on the water sector (Turkey), among others.

The text on energy contains proposals to, *inter alia*: recognize the importance of access to sustainable energy services in order to achieve the MDGs (EU); underline the strong interdependence between energy, water and food security (EU); provide financial resources to developing countries, in particular middle-income countries, for efficient and wider use of energy sources (Belarus); and phase out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies that encourage wasteful consumption and undermine sustainable development (Switzerland).

A proposed section on sustainable tourism contains proposals to: fully comply with ODA and other agreed commitments in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication (G-77/China); and pledge stronger commitment to the recommendations of the UN World Tourism Organization Global Code of Ethics, the Global Partnership on Sustainable Tourism, and the Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development under the Convention on Biological Diversity. Text on sustainable transportation includes a proposal to recognize the concerns of landlocked and transit developing countries when establishing transit transport systems, as established in the Almaty Programme of Action (G-77/China and Kazakhstan).

Proposed text on cities includes calls for the third UN Conference on housing and sustainable urban development, in 2016, to build on the Habitat Agenda among the outcomes from other major UN conferences and summits (G-77/China), and the establishment of a platform to promote sustainable cities (Japan).

Proposed text on health includes a proposal to also incorporate "population" issues into the section. On green jobs, proposals were offered to emphasize the need to prioritize poverty eradication and support efforts of developing countries in promoting empowerment of the poor (G-77/China), reaffirm the importance of addressing the needs of rural communities (Holy See), and recognize that job creation opportunities can be availed through investments in restoration of natural capital, a low-carbon economy, and sustainable resource management, among others (EU).

Proposals for the text on oceans and seas, and a proposed separate section on SIDS, include: assuring that coherence between measures applied within areas within and beyond national jurisdiction are compatible to the rights and obligations of all states under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) (EU); encouraging states to become parties to the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments (Mexico); commit to launching negotiation in the framework of the UNGA of the implementation agreement under UNCLOS for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity (EU); several options calling for efforts related to fishing subsidies; and calling for the convening the next SIDS conference in 2014 (G-77/China) or 2016 (EU).

Proposals related to natural disasters call for various follow-up actions related to the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015, among others. Proposals related to climate change call for: deeper emission cuts (Norway); development of a protocol, another legal instrument or an agreed outcome with legal force under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (New Zealand); and increased resources for adaptation actions (G-77/China).

Proposals related to forests and biodiversity call for: urgent implementation of the Ministerial Declaration of the high-level segment of the ninth session of the UN Forum on Forests (G-77/China); forest partners and key actors to examine the implications of new and emerging forest-related financing initiatives relating to the three Rio Conventions (G-77/China); and cooperation in conjunction with regional and subregional processes such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development initiative and the Tehran Process on Low Forest Cover Countries (G-77/China).

Proposals related to biodiversity and ecosystem services call for: welcoming and encouraging progress on the decisions adopted at the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and supporting their effective implementation (EU); enhancing support for implementation of the Resolution of the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice on illicit trafficking in endangered species, including through the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (EU); acknowledging the value of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services as a means of strengthening the science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services (Canada); and strengthening the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (G-77/China and EU).

Proposals related to land degradation and desertification include referencing of the Changwon Initiative (Republic of Korea), strengthening the scientific base of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) (G-77/China), and setting goals on land use, with targets toward achieving zero net land degradation (Republic of Korea).

Proposals related to mountains include integration of mountain-specific strategies in national sustainable development strategies, poverty reduction plans and programmes (Switzerland).

Proposals related to chemicals and waste call for: mercury agreement negotiations to be completed by 2013 (Japan), gradual phasedown of hydrofluorocarbons (Canada), and ending of illegal dumping in developing countries (G-77/China).

Proposals related to sustainable consumption and production include: promoting creation of new economic opportunities for all countries (G-77/China); and labeling schemes or product standards (EU). During the discussion on 27 March 2012, the G-77/China highlighted the importance of addressing over-consumption in the text, saying that a majority of amendments are related to efficiency but do not give enough importance to over-consumption. He proposed deleting a US proposal to invite UNEP to adopt the text of the 10 Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production YFP as elaborated at CSD-19, saying that an agreement on this framework has not been reached in other fora.

Proposals related to education include: focusing on education for women and girls, particularly in science, technology, engineering and math (US); recognition of the right to education and the interlinkages between education and the advancement of other MDGs (G-77/China); and calling on educational institutions to become models of best practice and transformation by setting an example of sustainability of facilities (Georgia). During the discussion on Tuesday, 27 March, on education, the G-77/China said it did not agree with proposals to include cultural and training issues in this section, and suggested moving training to the subsection on jobs and social inclusion. Responding to a G-77/China query, Australia explained that its proposal about the Global Partnership for Education was not an attempt to privatize education, but rather to mobilize private sector funds. The G-77/China indicated willingness to work with the Holy See to incorporate a provision on education programmes and initiatives focused on promoting ecological awareness and responsibility.

Proposals related to family included “the widest possible protection and assistance to the family” (Holy See). During the discussion on Tuesday, 27 March, on family, the G-77/China opposed the Holy See’s proposed two paragraphs, saying that they were not prepared to debate the “complex issues it presents” within the context of Rio+20.

Proposals related to gender equality included: recalling the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action adopted in 1995 (G-77/China); acceleration of implementation of commitments, including through repeal of discriminatory laws (Norway) and raising the proportion of women in leadership positions to at least 40% (Iceland). During the discussion on Tuesday, 27 March, on gender equality, the G-77/China indicated a willingness to work on a paragraph on sustainable development being linked to and dependent on women’s economic contributions, as well as Switzerland’s proposal on integration of women in economic and political decision-making, environmental management and development. On a proposal for all monitoring frameworks to use gender sensitive indicators and gender disaggregated data, the G-77/China said they could accept this concept if it is linked with a capacity-building framework for data and monitoring. The G-77/China proposed keeping text on women’s access to and control over productive resources consistent with the Cairo Declaration.

Proposals related to the private sector included a global system for national sustainability accounting and reporting (EU). The G-77/China said it could only agree to national accounting within national laws.

Proposals related to sustainable innovation and investment included: policies to reduce investor uncertainty, criteria for cost-effective procurement, and sustainability standards for resource extraction (EU); establishment of natural resource and externality pricing instruments (Norway); and expansion of existing G20 and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation commitments regarding rationalization and phasing out of inefficient fossil fuel subsidies (EU).

**B. Accelerating and Measuring Progress:** Amendments to the compilation text considered during the informal informal segment addressed the relationship between the SDGs and MDGs and the post-2015 development target-setting process, the need to strengthen the capacity of all countries to collect and

analyze data in support of SDGs’ monitoring, and the need to develop indicators complementing GDP as a measure of well-being, among other issues. Specific proposals called for, *inter alia*: encouraging countries to develop the capacity to monitor and integrate environmental, social and economic data in order to value natural and social capital (US); establishing an integrated and scientifically credible global sustainable development assessment to support policy making, and specifying that the process to set the SDGs should be country-driven (Mexico); and requesting the SG to launch and coordinate an inclusive process to elaborate SDGs by 2015 (EU).

During the discussion on Tuesday, 27 March, the G-77/China proposed that the structure of the text on SDGs should be: the vision on SDGs; principles that should guide SDGs; and the process. The G-77/China said the process should be: intergovernmental; inclusive, transparent and open-ended; and under the UNGA.

On the principles and characteristics that should guide the SDGs, the G-77/China objected to Switzerland’s proposal to delete “achieve poverty eradication” as the first principle. The Group proposed adding “the SDGs shall be voluntary in nature” to the list of principles and characteristics. Switzerland said it did not want to single out a single dimension, given the need to integrate various dimensions of sustainable development.

**C. Means of Implementation:** Amendments to the zero draft text considered during the informal informal segment included those on, *inter alia*:

- aid effectiveness (EU);
- developed countries meeting their commitments on ODA, doubling aid to Africa and financial commitments under the UNFCCC (G-77/China);
- mechanisms for results-based financing of ecosystem services (Norway);
- creating an enabling environment for technology transfer and technology adaptation (G-77/China);
- a system-wide strategy for capacity building in the field of sustainable development (Mexico);
- the gradual elimination of environmentally harmful subsidies that impede the transition to sustainable development (Iceland); and
- commitments voluntarily entered into at Rio+20 and throughout 2012 to implement concrete policies, plans and programmes to promote sustainable development and poverty reduction, including through a green economy approach (US).

During the discussion on Tuesday, 27 March, the G-77/China said the section on Means of Implementation should be included in a new Chapter VI, which would comprise the subsections on finance, technology transfer and capacity building. He also proposed a new paragraph calling for the establishment of centers of excellence in developing countries as nodal points for technology research and development. Belarus reiterated its proposal to establish a global fund for voluntary contribution by states, civil society and private sector, to facilitate transfer of green technologies, saying that Rio+20 should lead to specific decisions that could assist in the transfer of green clean technologies.

## A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE MEETING

Delegates that gathered at UN Headquarters for seven negotiating days in March found themselves tasked with a very demanding assignment: the “zero draft” of the outcome document for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD or Rio+20) had ballooned from 19 to approximately 206 pages, when all proposed amendments were added. Delegates devoted the majority of their time to a “first reading” of the sections on green economy in the context of poverty eradication and sustainable development, the institutional framework for sustainable development, and the framework for action and follow-up. Many observers commented that “reading” aptly described the session: as proposals for additions, changes and deletions in the zero draft text added yet more pages to its length and were often offered with limited explanation.

Alongside this process, the corridors of the UN Headquarters North Lawn Building were abuzz with parallel meetings and side events. In contrast to the main meeting, forums and discussions held at lunchtimes and evenings provided substantial presentations and discussion of policy options, while intense networking took place in the corridors. The disparity between the energy in the corridors and side events compared to that in the informal negotiations raised questions about what the Rio+20 Conference can actually achieve. This analysis considers that challenge in light of the seven negotiating days in March.

### **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT +20**

Delegates in 2012 find themselves in a very different world than their counterparts did in 1992. That Summit had higher ambitions and more negotiating days—the UNCED PrepCom met for an organizational and four substantive sessions for a total of 18 weeks over two years. In contrast, UN General Assembly Resolution 64/236, which set out the parameters for Rio+20, established a limited agenda and limited preparation time. Interest in sustainable development today is more dispersed across constituencies, and many more players are in the field.

While governments are being called on to take strong and decisive action at Rio+20, the push-and-pull of civil society participation has greatly intensified, and intergovernmental processes are both more numerous and more complex, thereby increasing the demands on the time and energy of negotiators.

What this means is that the Rio+20 preparatory process is only one of many venues for decisions on environmental, social and economic development-related issues. Consequently, some suggested that this situation lessens the potential influence of the decisions to be taken in Rio. In effect, they argue that it is a little wheel, compared to the big wheels of the climate change process, trade agreements or the international financial institutions, leading some to wonder whether Rio is the right process to address global challenges twenty years after its namesake.

Inevitably, comparisons are being made with the hopes and intentions of the first Rio Conference: many point out that the current debates are rooted in decisions from the past 20 years. Developing countries look at the agreements over this period, and what they see as the lack of full implementation of commitments made at the Earth Summit in 1992 and at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002. On the other hand, developed countries have suggested that the focus should be on how the role of public and private sector

actions has evolved over the past 20 years. Developing countries’ references to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities throughout the draft text was met by developed countries with frequent requests for not singling out individual principles, prompting one observer to note that the Rio Principles have generated debate ever since they were adopted. In such an atmosphere, as a policy expert from the global South commented, there is a prospect that nothing will be achieved and that the conference could “end in acrimony.” Now that the wheels have been set in motion, however, some suggested that there is also the policy space to create real alternatives to the current impasse.

### **SETTING THE STAGE FOR THE NEXT ACT?**

Many of the issues related to the UNCSD’s two themes were at the core of interventions from many delegations, albeit with very different emphases. Developed countries have promoted the possibility of a green economy in which externalities are factored into choices about how to produce and what to consume. The “Green Economy in the Context of Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development” agenda item has been the focus of many recent environmental policy discussions, including at the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum’s meeting in Nairobi in February. While questions remain, discussions have pointed towards the need for a better basis for planning and implementing of sustainable development aims: bringing science and the policy making process closer together; sharing knowledge across borders; and developing “beyond GDP” indicators that can encapsulate both costs and benefits to human well-being. At the March informal informals, however, developing countries resisted mention of a green economy “roadmap” in the text and expressed concern that this could become a pretext for aid and trade conditionality. Poverty eradication, they argued, not the greenness of the economy, jobs, or technology, must be at the core of sustainable development.

Some have defined the discussions on the institutional framework for sustainable development (IFSD), the other theme of Rio+20, as the biggest challenge facing the Conference, with many emphasizing that elements under this agenda item are among those issues that “will keep us up the last night in Rio.” While dissatisfaction with the Commission on Sustainable Development is widespread, the proposed alternatives have not generated a clear favorite. Observers note that proposals for a strengthened ECOSOC or creating a sustainable development council (SDC) both have potential strengths and pitfalls. Strengthening ECOSOC might be easier to do organizationally, but its broad agenda and its limited headway in promoting sustainable development coordination, despite past agreements to this effect, has limited the enthusiasm for this option. Meanwhile, the prospect of an SDC raises concern over the budgetary implications among some delegations. Many non-governmental organization representatives at the March meeting favored an SDC as potentially offering more space for participation, than would be possible under the current arrangements with ECOSOC. Some, however, privately question whether a council would be simply a cosmetic name change or garner real transformation in addressing sustainable development

priorities—with the latter relying more on political will rather than institutional organization. Discussion of alternatives related to UNEP remains for another round of talks.

Some suggested that the success of another possible outcome from Rio+20—on the proposed sustainable development goals (SDGs)—may rest on decisions regarding the IFSD. The SDGs proposal, originally advanced by Colombia and Guatemala, has garnered support from developed and developing countries, as well as the report of the Secretary-General’s High-level Panel on Global Sustainability. Observers have highlighted that such goals would be universally applied, unlike the current Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which primarily apply to poorer nations. Supporters emphasize that the SDGs will need to build on successful aspects of the MDGs. However, the challenges will be numerous as negotiators attempt to define a consensus text on a process for developing the goals. Privately, some delegates noted procedural concerns about potential overlap with and the relationship to the MDGs, which this meeting does not have a mandate to address. Nevertheless, developing countries agreed to explore a process for consideration of SDGs, opening the possibility that delegates at Rio might have SDGs to point to as the outcome, although some mentioned that this “is another one of those issues that will go into the wee hours of the morning in Rio.”

Another proposed outcome, a “compendium of commitments” database, according to its supporters, could offer both public and private actors the opportunity to register their own sustainable development commitments. Proponents say it offers the possibility of more meaningful actions by a range of actors, and can be monitored. Some note similarities with the registry of actions under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Some pointed to other precedents. For example, the “Every Woman, Every Child” initiative housed in the office of the Secretary-General maintains a registry of commitments on health and development, while the International Labor Organization has an online database on labor standards monitoring. Others highlighted that something similar has been planned in text related to the 10 Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production in the form of a listing of initiatives undertaken not only by states and UN bodies, but also by other actors, whether other intergovernmental organizations, private sector or civil society.

Developing countries bracketed the compendium on commitments proposal due to concerns that developed countries could use this approach to evade meeting sustainable development commitments reached over the past 20 years, diluting responsibility through the dispersal of actions among public and private stakeholders. Others considered the compendium to be a promising approach, well suited to the “web 2.0” nature of the world today. Yet still others expressed the view that, while some targets may be met through the goodwill of the private sector, governments have a responsibility to make sustainable choices more possible through changes in regulatory frameworks, so that the correct price and other signals are given.

### **RETURNING TO FIRST PRINCIPLES**

Everyone has called for new ideas, but, as one stakeholder asked, “How do you get new ideas into an antiquated political system?” This chicken-and-egg situation could persist indefinitely, if governments do not take strong action in the

coming two and a half months. In the context of discussion about commonly defined goals for sustainable development – in other words, SDGs – one delegate from a developing country highlighted the need to return to first principles on why the UN is needed: common planetary problems can only be solved collectively, and Rio offers a chance for common agenda setting and prioritization. One stakeholder expressed the view that “the real action is in the country capitals,” where state and non-state actors are now in full preparation mode, suggesting that this second Rio process, in the end, may be the little wheel that makes the bigger intergovernmental wheels turn. The energy in the corridors during the March meeting, not to mention the extraordinary number of events that multiple actors are organizing around the Rio+20 event, demonstrate that this meeting does have “convening” power, and will indirectly send ripples through the sustainable development policy community. The member states of the UN have the opportunity, through their outcome document, to set the course for that little wheel.

### **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

**High-Level Meeting on Happiness and Well-being:** This High-Level Meeting will gather experts to work together to identify the measures, accounts and financial mechanisms required for a happiness-based economic model to be available for incorporation into national policies. The meeting follows UN General Assembly Resolution 65/309, which calls for a “holistic approach to development” aimed at promoting sustainable happiness and wellbeing. **date:** 2 April 2012 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** Claire Bulger, Special Assistant to Jeffrey Sachs **phone:** +1-347-439-2173 **email:** cbulger@ei.columbia.edu **www:** <http://www.2apr.gov.bt/>

**Realizing Inclusive and Green Growth: UN Rio+20 Business and Industry Consultation with Government and Civil Society:** The Government of the Netherlands, the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Business Action for Sustainable Development are sponsoring this invitation-only, high-level business and industry consultation. The meeting is intended to offer an opportunity for business representatives, UN member states and the wider international community to discuss critical private sector issues for Rio+20 and the role for business and industry in realizing inclusive green growth. **dates:** 11-12 April 2012 **location:** The Hague, Netherlands **email:** [rio2012-business@evite.nl](mailto:rio2012-business@evite.nl) **www:** [https://www.evite-sendmail.nl/rio/rio2012/web/rio2012\\_introduction.php](https://www.evite-sendmail.nl/rio/rio2012/web/rio2012_introduction.php)

**UNCTAD XIII:** The 13th Session of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD XIII) will be held on the theme, “Development-centered globalization: Towards inclusive and sustainable growth and development.” **dates:** 21-26 April 2012 **location:** Doha, Qatar **contact:** UNCTAD Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-1234 **fax:** +41-22- 917-0057 **email:** [unctadxiii@unctad.org](mailto:unctadxiii@unctad.org) **www:** <http://unctadxiii.org>

**Stockholm+40 Partnership Forum for Sustainable Development:** In commemoration of the UN Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm in 1972, this event creates a platform for dialogue on sustainable innovations, sustainable production and sustainable lifestyles. Stockholm+40 also represents an early milestones for the Climate and Clean Air Coalition to reduce Short-lived Climate Pollutants: the first

meeting of the Partnership will be held on 23-24 April, with both ministerial and working group sessions. A scientific seminar on Short-Lived Climate Pollutants will also be held during these days. **dates:** 23-25 April 2012 **location:** Stockholm, Sweden **contact:** Ministry of Environment, Sweden **phone:** +46-8-405-1000 **fax:** +46-8-241629 **www:** <http://www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/15451/a/181900>

**Second round of Informal-Informal negotiations on the zero draft of the Outcome Document:** This is the second of two “informal informal” consultations to negotiate the draft outcome document for Rio+20. **dates:** 23 April - 4 May 2012 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UNCSA Secretariat **email:** [uncsd2012@un.org](mailto:uncsd2012@un.org) **www:** <http://www.uncsd2012.org/>

**World Summit on the Information Society Forum 2012:** This Forum is organized by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the UN Development Programme (UNDP). It will focus on sustainable development trends and information and communication technology (ICT) initiatives in some key focus areas of the Millennium Development Goals, such as health, education, gender empowerment and the environment. The Forum will also include the World Telecommunication and Information Society Day awards ceremony, which will recognize three outstanding laureates in the field of technology and gender. **dates:** 14-18 May 2012 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **contact:** Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-730-5111 **fax:** +41-22-730-6453 **email:** [wsis-info@itu.int](mailto:wsis-info@itu.int) **www:** <http://groups.itu.int/wsis-forum2012/>

**101st Session of the International Labour Conference:** This session is expected to consider employment and social protection in the new demographic context, sustainable development, decent work and green jobs. **dates:** 30 May - 15 June 2012 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **contact:** ILO Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-799-6111 **fax:** +41-22-798-8685 **email:** [ilo@ilo.org](mailto:ilo@ilo.org) **www:** <http://www.ilo.org/ilc/ILCSessions/101stSession/lang--en/index.htm>

**Youth Blast:** This event is organized by the UNCSA Major Group of Children and Youth as the official young people’s event for Rio+20. The objectives of the Youth Blast are to: empower children and youth present at Rio+20; provide information and training for leaders; and provide a space for young people to share best practices for implementing solutions and participating in decision-making at the international level. The first two days of the event (8-9 June) will be held in Portuguese, and the last three days (10-12 June) will be conducted in English, with Portuguese, Spanish and French translations. **dates:** 8-12 June 2012 **location:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazil **email:** [uncsdmgcy@gmail.com](mailto:uncsdmgcy@gmail.com) **www:** <http://uncsdchildreneyouth.org/rio20/youth-blast/>

**Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for Sustainable Development:** This Forum will provide a space for interdisciplinary scientific discussions, and dialogue between scientists, policy-makers, Major Groups and other stakeholders. Key messages and conclusions from the Forum will be reported to UNCSA. **dates:** 11-15 June 2012 **location:** Rio de Janeiro,

Brazil **contact:** Maureen Brennan **phone:** +33-1-4525-0677 **fax:** +33-1-4288-9431 **email:** [Maureen.Brennan@icsu.org](mailto:Maureen.Brennan@icsu.org) **www:** <http://www.icsu.org/rio20/science-and-technology-forum>

**Third PrepCom for UNCSA:** This meeting will take place in Brazil prior to the UNCSA. **dates:** 13-15 June 2012 **location:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazil **contact:** UNCSA Secretariat **email:** [uncsd2012@un.org](mailto:uncsd2012@un.org) **www:** <http://www.uncsd2012.org/>

**Global and Regional Research Workshop on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) Systems:** This workshop is organized by the Global Research Forum on Sustainable Consumption and Production, and will focus on the production of SCP research, as well as its communication and application in practice. It will bring this research together through review papers from various perspectives, make it available to practitioners and the wider public, including participants at the UNCSA and promote support for new research based on practitioners’ research needs. The workshop is by invitation only. **dates:** 13-15 June 2012 **location:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazil **contact:** Philip Vergragt **email:** [pvergragt@tellus.org](mailto:pvergragt@tellus.org) **www:** <http://grfscp.wordpress.com/>

**Global Town Hall at Rio+20:** The meeting is convened by ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability, during the UNCSA. Discussions will address how local governments can best contribute to global targets for protecting global common goods, how to “green” the urban economy and how to improve global and local governance systems. **dates:** 13-22 June 2012 **location:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazil **contact:** Monika Zimmerman **phone:** +49-228/976 299-30 **email:** [rio20@iclei.org](mailto:rio20@iclei.org) **www:** <http://local2012.iclei.org/iclei-and-rio-20/rio-20-global-town-hall/>

**The Rio Conventions Pavilion at Rio+20:** This event is a collaborative outreach activity of the Secretariats of the Rio Conventions (UNFCCC, UNCCD and CBD), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and 25 other international, national and local partners. It aims to promote and strengthen synergies between the Rio Conventions at implementation levels by providing a coordinated platform for awareness-raising and information-sharing about the linkages in science, policy and practice between biodiversity, climate change and combating desertification/land degradation. **dates:** 13-22 June 2012 **location:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazil **contact:** Rio Conventions Pavilion **phone:** +1-514-288-6588 **fax:** +1-514-288-6588 **email:** [info@riopavilion.org](mailto:info@riopavilion.org) **www:** <http://www.riopavilion.org/>

**SD-Learning:** This capacity-building event provides participants with practical knowledge and training through multiple courses on aspects of sustainable development. **dates:** 13-22 June 2012 **location:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazil **contact:** UNCSA Secretariat **email:** [uncsd2012@un.org](mailto:uncsd2012@un.org) **www:** [http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/meetings\\_sdlearning.html](http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/meetings_sdlearning.html)

**ICLEI - 2012 World Congress:** This triennial congress will address themes including: green urban economy; changing citizens, changing cities; greening events; and food security and how biodiversity protection can be integrated into municipal planning and decision-making. **dates:** 14-17 June 2012 **location:** Belo Horizonte, Brazil **contact:** ICLEI World Secretariat **phone:** +49 228 97 62 9900 **fax:** +49 228 97 62 9901 **email:** [world.congress@iclei.org](mailto:world.congress@iclei.org) **www:** <http://worldcongress2012.iclei.org>

**First GLOBE Summit of Legislators:** The summit will be hosted by the Government of Brazil, Mayor of Rio de Janeiro, GLOBE International and GLOBE Brazil on the weekend prior to UNCSD, attended by heads of Senates, Congresses, Parliaments, and Chairs of relevant parliamentary committees, to negotiate a legislators' protocol to be ratified in the respective legislatures of the participating parliaments. **dates:** 15-17 June 2012 **location:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazil **contact:** GLOBE International **phone:** +44-0-20 7222 6960 **fax:** +44-20-7222 6959 **email:** info@globeinternational.org **www:** <http://www.globeinternational.info/world-summit-of-legislators/>

**Rio+20 Corporate Sustainability Forum: Innovation and Collaboration for the Future We Want:** The forum will give business and investors an opportunity to meet with governments, local authorities, civil society and UN entities in highly focused workshops and thematic sessions linked to the Rio+20 agenda. **dates:** 15-18 June 2012 **location:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazil **contact:** UN Global Compact Office **phone:** +1-212-907-1347 **fax:** +1-212-963-1207 **email:** rio2012@unglobalcompact.org **www:** <http://www.unglobalcompact.org/>

**Peoples Summit for Social and Environmental Justice in defense of the commons:** The Peoples Summit is being organized by 150 organizations, entities and social movements from various countries, and is scheduled to take place alongside the UNCSD. The objective of the Summit is to request governments to give political power to the Conference. **dates:** 15-23 June 2012 **location:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazil **email:** contact@forums.rio20.net **www:** <http://rio20.net/en/>

**Solutions for a Sustainable Planet International Conference:** The International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) is working with partners in Brazil and with international networks and alliances, to organize a series of simultaneous meetings, presentations and discussions around five key "solutions for a sustainable planet" to generate commitment to act on key issues on the UNCSD agenda. **dates:** 16-17 June 2012 **location:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazil **contact:** IIED **phone:** +44-20-7388-2117 **fax:** +44-20-7388-2826 **email:** info@iied.org **www:** <http://www.solutionsforsustainableplanet.org>

**Oceans Day at UNCSD:** This event is organized by the Global Ocean Forum. **dates:** 17-19 June 2012 **location:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazil **contact:** Miriam Balgos **phone:** +1-302-831-8086 **fax:** +1-302-831-3668 **email:** mbalgos@udel.edu **www:** <http://www.globoceans.org/content/rio20>

**World Congress on Justice, Governance and Law for Environmental Sustainability:** This event, organized by UNEP, promotes global consensus among relevant stakeholders engaged in the development of law, Chief Justices and senior judges, Attorneys-General and Public Prosecutors involved in the interpretation and enforcement of law. **dates:** 17-20 June 2012 **location:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazil **contact:** Cristina Zucca **email:** Cristina.Zucca@unep.org **www:** <http://www.unep.org/dec/worldcongress/>

**G20 Leaders' Summit:** The Group of 20 (G20) Leaders' Summit will take place in Los Cabos, Mexico, and will be the first such summit to occur in Latin America. In its G20 Presidency role during 2012, Mexico has prioritized: economic stability and structural reform for growth and employment; strengthening of financial systems and procurement of financial inclusion for economic growth; improving international financial

architecture in an interconnected global economy; mitigating negative effects on price level and volatility of commodities, in particular those affecting food security; and promoting sustainable development with a focus on infrastructure, energy efficiency, green growth and financing the fight against climate change. **dates:** 18-19 June 2012 **location:** Los Cabos, Mexico **www:** <http://www.g20.org/>

**Rio+Social:** This event, organized by Mashable, 92nd Street Y, Ericsson, Energias de Portugal (EDP), LiveAD, and the UN Foundation, is an "in-person gathering and global, online conversation on the potential of social media and technology to power a more innovative and better future for our world". It is set to feature addresses from, among others, Ted Turner and Gro Harlem Brundtland. **date:** 19 June 2012 **location:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (worldwide) **contact:** Aaron Sherinian **phone:** +1-202-887-9040 **www:** <http://rioplussocial.com.br/en/>

**UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20):** The UNCSD will mark the 20th anniversary of the UN Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit), which convened in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992. **dates:** 20-22 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
IFIs	International financial institutions
IFSD	Institutional framework for sustainable development
LDCs	Least developed countries
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
ODA	Official development assistance
Rio+20	UN Conference on Sustainable Development (or UNCSD)
SDGs	Sustainable development goals
SG	Secretary-General
SIDS	Small island developing states
UNCCD	UN Convention to Combat Desertification
UNCED	UN Conference on Environment and Development
UNCLOS	UN Convention on Law of the Sea
UNCSD	United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (or Rio+20)
UNEP	UN Environment Programme
UNFCCC	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNGA	UN General Assembly
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development
WTO	World Trade Organization