

TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE UNEP GOVERNING COUNCIL/GLOBAL MINISTERIAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM: 16-20 FEBRUARY 2009

The 25th session of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC-25/GMEF) opens today at UNEP headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya, and will continue until Friday, 20 February 2009. Ministers will discuss emerging policy issues under the themes: "Globalization and the environment: global crises: national chaos?" and "International Environmental Governance and United Nations reform: help or hindrance?"

The GC-25/GMEF will also consider reports on: strengthening the scientific and financial base of UNEP; the Global Environment Outlook (GEO); chemicals management, including mercury and waste management; small island developing states (SIDS); support to Africa in environmental management and protection; South-South cooperation in achieving sustainable development; updated UNEP water policy and strategy; budget and programme of work for the biennium 2008-2009; long-term strategy on engagement of young people in environmental issues; future and current programmes for the development and periodic review of environmental law; and the outcome of the *ad hoc* intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder meeting on an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services (IPBES).

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UNEP GC/GMEF

As a result of the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment, the UN General Assembly (GA), in its resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 1972, officially established UNEP as the central UN node for global environmental cooperation and treaty making. The resolution also established the UNEP Governing Council (GC) to provide a forum for the international community to address major and emerging environmental policy issues. The GC's responsibilities include the promotion of international environmental cooperation and the recommendation of policies to achieve it, and the provision of policy guidance for the direction and coordination of environmental programmes in the UN system. The GC reports to the GA, which also elects the GC's 58 members for four-year terms, taking into account the principle of equitable regional representation. The GMEF is constituted by the GC as envisaged in GA resolution 53/242. The purpose of the GMEF is to institute, at a high political level, a process for reviewing important and emerging policy issues in the field of the environment.

GC-19: The session convened in two parts from 27 January-7 February 1997 and from 3-4 April 1997 at UNEP headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. Delegates adopted the Nairobi Declaration on

the Role and Mandate of UNEP, which expanded the mandate to include: analyzing the state of the global environment; assessing global and regional environmental trends; providing policy advice and early warning information on environmental threats; and catalyzing and promoting international cooperation and action, based on the best scientific and technical capabilities available.

GC-20: This session took place from 1-5 February 1999, in Nairobi, and adopted over 30 decisions on a range of topics, including: the Environment Fund, administrative and budgetary matters; linkages among and support to environmental and environment-related conventions; and policy issues, including the state of the environment, coordination and cooperation within and outside the UN, UNEP governance and emerging policy issues.

GCSS-6/GMEF: The sixth Special Session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum took place from 29-31 May 2000, in Malmö, Sweden. Ministers adopted the Malmö Ministerial Declaration, which agreed that the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) should review the requirements for a greatly strengthened institutional structure for IEG.

GC-21/GMEF: This meeting took place from 5-9 February 2001, in Nairobi. Delegates established the Open-ended Intergovernmental Group of Ministers or Their Representatives (IGM) to undertake a comprehensive policy-oriented assessment of existing institutional weaknesses, as well as future needs and options for strengthening IEG. They also adopted decision 21/7, which requests the UNEP Executive Director to examine the need for a strategic approach to international chemicals management (SAICM).

GCSS-7/GMEF: This meeting was held from 13-15 February 2002, in Cartagena, Colombia. In its decision SS.VII/1, the GC/GMEF adopted the IGM report, which contains recommendations aimed at strengthening IEG, including through: improved coherence in international environmental policy-making; strengthening the role and financial situation of UNEP; improved coordination among and effectiveness of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs); and capacity building, technology transfer and country-level coordination. Delegates also adopted decisions related to, *inter alia*, SAICM at the global level.

WSSD: The WSSD was held from 26 August-4 September 2002, in Johannesburg, South Africa. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) sets out a framework for action to implement the commitments originally agreed at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. The JPOI, among other things, emphasized that the international community should fully implement the outcomes of decision SS.VII/1 on IEG.

GC-22/GMEF: This meeting took place from 3-7 February 2003, in Nairobi. Delegates adopted more than 40 decisions on issues relating to IEG, post-conflict environmental assessment, UNEP's water policy and strategy, SAICM, a mercury programme, support to Africa, production and consumption patterns, and the environment and cultural diversity.

GCSS-8/GMEF: This meeting took place from 29-31 March 2004, in Jeju, Republic of Korea. At the conclusion of the ministerial consultations, delegates adopted the "Jeju Initiative," containing the Chair's summary of the discussions and decisions on: SIDS; waste management; regional annexes; and the implementation of decision SS.VII/1 on IEG.

GC-23/GMEF: This meeting took place from 21-25 February 2005, in Nairobi. Ministers considered the implementation of internationally agreed development goals, and adopted decisions on, among other things: the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building; IEG; chemicals management; UNEP's water policy and strategy; gender equality and the environment; poverty and the environment; and strengthening environmental emergency response and developing disaster prevention, preparedness, mitigation and early warning systems.

2005 WORLD SUMMIT: The 2005 World Summit was held at UN headquarters in New York from 14-16 September. Delegates recognized the need for more efficient environmental activities in the UN system, through, *inter alia*, enhanced coordination, improved policy advice and guidance, and strengthened scientific knowledge. They further agreed to explore the possibility of a more coherent institutional framework, including a more integrated structure, building on existing institutions and internationally agreed instruments, as well as treaty bodies and UN specialized agencies.

ICCM: The International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM) was held from 4-6 February 2006, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, immediately prior to GCSS-9/GMEF. At the ICCM, delegates completed negotiations and adopted the SAICM, including a high-level declaration, overarching policy strategy and global plan of action.

GCSS-9/GMEF: This meeting was held from 7-9 February 2006, in Dubai. Ministerial consultations addressed, *inter alia*, policy issues relating to energy and environment, chemicals management, and tourism and the environment. The plenary discussion on environmental governance, outcome of the 2005 World Summit, and GC universal membership did not produce an agreed outcome, and delegates decided that the report of the meeting should reflect the divergence of views expressed.

GC-24/GMEF: This meeting convened from 5-9 February 2007, in Nairobi. Delegates adopted 15 decisions on issues relating, *inter alia*, to: chemicals, including a provision to establish the *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) to Review and Assess Measures to Address the Global Issue of Mercury; the world environmental situation; IEG; South-South cooperation; waste management; 2010-2020 UN Decade for Deserts and the Fight Against Desertification; UNEP's updated water policy and strategy; and support to Africa in environmental management and protection.

GCSS-10/GMEF: This meeting convened from 20-22 February 2008, in the Principality of Monaco. Ministerial consultations addressed the emerging policy issues of mobilizing finance to meet the climate challenge, and IEG and UN reform. The GC/GMEF adopted five decisions on: the UNEP Medium-term Strategy 2010-2013; chemicals management, including mercury and waste management; the GEO; sustainable development of the Arctic region; and the International Decade for Combating Climate Change.

INTERSESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

INFORMAL CONSULTATIVE PROCESS: The UN GA at its 60th session established the Informal Consultative Process on the Institutional Framework for the UN Environmental Activities. The process seeks to strengthen the current system of IEG by focusing on questions related to: UNEP; improvement of cooperation within the UN and among the MEAs; as well as funding mechanisms and partnerships.

On 14 June 2007, following year-long consultations with UN member states, Co-Chairs Amb. Claude Heller (Mexico) and Amb. Peter Maurer (Switzerland) presented an Options Paper, which identifies seven building blocks to strengthen IEG: scientific assessment, monitoring and early warning capacity; inter-agency coordination and cooperation; MEAs; regional presence and activities at the regional level; the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building, information technology, partnerships and advocacy; and financing. In addition, the Paper addresses the future IEG system, including the possibility of transforming UNEP into a UN Environment Organization (UNEO). Based on the feedback of the previous two years, in May 2008 the Co-Chairs drafted a proposal for a GA resolution aimed at translating the Options Paper and subsequent input received into legislative language. On the basis of comments received, the Co-Chairs prepared a revised draft resolution, which was discussed on 12 September. Delegations proposed specific amendments. The Co-Chairs subsequently recommended that, given the difficulties in finding consensus and the opposing views on fundamental issues, all interested parties should make the best use of upcoming intergovernmental meetings to continue consideration of the matter.

SECOND OEWG MEETING ON MERCURY: The OEWG convened from 6-10 October 2008 in Nairobi, Kenya. The OEWG discussed a future mercury framework. Delegates agreed on text to be used as a basis for UNEP GC discussions that contains the elements of a comprehensive mercury framework, and narrowed down the list of implementation instruments, one legally-binding and three voluntary options, for the consideration of the GC.

ICCM PREPARATIONS: The first meeting of the Open-ended Legal and Technical Working Group (OELTWG) of the ICCM and informal discussions on preparations for the second meeting of the ICCM (ICCM-2), was held from 21-24 October 2008, in Rome, Italy. The OELTWG discussed the rules of procedure for the ICCM, but did not complete its work. These discussions will continue at ICCM-2. The informal discussions included preparatory dialogue on issues to be considered at ICCM-2 including *inter alia*: financial and technical resources for SAICM implementation, including evaluating the performance of financing of SAICM; and the relationship between the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS) and SAICM.

AD HOC IPBES: The IPBES met from 10-12 November 2008, in Putrajaya, Malaysia. Participants exchanged views on the core mandate and functions, focus areas, governance structure, and proposed work programme and budget of an IPBES, as laid out in a concept note based on the follow-up to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) and the Consultative Process Towards an International Mechanism of Scientific Expertise on Biodiversity (IMoSEB). Participants adopted a Chairs' Summary of the meeting, which highlights areas of agreement and reflects differing views expressed during the meeting.

THE TENTH SESSION OF THE GLOBAL CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM: This meeting was held from 14-15 February 2009, in Nairobi Kenya, prior to GC-25/GMEF. Participants addressed: engaging at the GC-25/GMEF; partnerships with major groups and stakeholders for the implementation for the UNEP Programme of Work for 2010-2011; globalization and the environment; and the chemicals agenda. The meeting also included an open dialogue with Achim Steiner, Executive Director, UNEP.

FORUM OF THE NETWORK OF WOMEN MINISTERS AND LEADERS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT: NWMLE) NWMLE convened on 15 February 2009, in Nairobi, Kenya. Experts and partners discussed emerging gender issues relating to the themes under consideration at GC-25/GMEF and made concrete recommendations for inclusion in the President's summary of the GC/GMEF.

GC-25/GMEF HIGHLIGHTS: MONDAY, 16 FEBRUARY 2009

Delegates at the 25th session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC-25/GMEF) convened in the morning for the opening ceremony, followed by consideration of organizational matters, and a policy statement by UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner. In the afternoon, delegates convened for ministerial consultations on the nature and scale of current environment and development challenges and opportunities under the themes “Global crises: national chaos?” and “International environmental governance: help or hindrance?” The Committee of the Whole (COW) also met in the afternoon and addressed organizational matters, and began consideration of the budget and programme of work for the biennium 2010-2011.

OPENING CEREMONY: GC-24/GMEF President Roberto Dobles, Minister of Environment, Costa Rica, welcomed delegates and noted several achievements including the completion of the 2010-2013 UNEP Medium-term Strategy (MTS), which he said provided clear vision and direction for UNEP.

Angela Cropper, Deputy Executive Secretary, UNEP, read a message on behalf of UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon stressing the importance of the GC/GMEF process, highlighting GC leadership on mercury and the need for a green economy.

Inga Klevsby, Deputy Executive Director, UN-Habitat, explained that cities are a driving force for global trade, but that they also generate the bulk of waste. Pointing to conventional wisdom predicting the economic downturn will lead to fewer jobs, she challenged delegates to see the situation as an opportunity.

UNEP Executive Director Steiner said UNEP challenges the myth that, when the economy is in crisis, environment and social issues take a back seat. He stressed that environment is part of the solution, and highlighted the green economy and the need for a green new deal. The environment ministers assembled at the GC/GMEF, he noted, have a unique opportunity to inspire and guide the global economic agenda.

Mwai Kibaki, President of the Republic of Kenya, called for greater vigor in addressing current environmental problems, for a global partnership for sustainable development, and moving to a green and low-carbon economy. He referred to the importance of strengthening global environmental governance, particularly in the field of compliance with existing multilateral agreements.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS: The plenary elected Oliver Dulić, Minister of Environment, Serbia, as GC-25/GMEF President. Other Bureau members elected were: Mohamed Cherif

Rahmani (Algeria), Juan Carlos Cué Vega (Mexico), and John Matuszak (US), as Vice-Presidents; and Budi Bowolesksono (Indonesia) as Rapporteur.

GC-25/GMEF President Oliver Dulić said events in 2008 demonstrated that environmental investment is the way to sustainable economic growth, and the GMEF should shape solutions to move the world forward. He declared his intention to use the President’s Summary toward that end, and urged the drafting group to begin work Monday afternoon. The plenary then adopted the draft agenda without amendment (UNEP/GC/25/1 and Add. 1/Rev.1) and agreed on the GC-25/GMEF’s organization of work.

POLICY STATEMENT BY THE EXECUTIVE

DIRECTOR: In his Policy Statement, Executive Director Steiner outlined a range of enabling reforms undertaken by UNEP as part of its MTS 2010-2013, noting the focus should not be on mobilizing finances to address global crises, but rather on the manner in which such funds are invested which will have a direct bearing on the resolution and mitigation of other environment and development challenges. He cited UNEP’s programmatic achievements over the past two years including *inter alia*: the launch of the Global Green New Deal and the Green Economy Initiative; enhancing delivery on the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building; mainstreaming results-based management; improving collaboration with more than 15 UN agencies under the One UN initiative. Steiner announced the appointment of Professor Joseph Alcamo as UNEP’s first Chief Scientist and informed delegates that in 2008 UNEP became a carbon neutral organization.

During the ensuing interventions, Nigeria, on behalf of G77/CHINA, stressed that a green economy must be pro-development and pro-poor, and urged developed countries to honor commitments and resist protectionist measures. The Czech Republic, for the EUROPEAN UNION, praised UNEP for responding quickly to the global financial crisis with the Green Economy Initiative. He welcomed the opportunity to discuss IEG, and said the EU wanted an institutional architecture with the ability to address wide threats in a globalizing world. The US hoped for a new spirit of partnership and cooperation and offered to play a leading role in addressing the climate change challenge. In reference to mercury, he said there was a solid basis for developing a legally-binding process. PALESTINE drew attention to the issues faced by his country resulting from occupation and human rights violations, linking these issues with continued environmental degradation.

MINISTERIAL CONSULTATIONS

GC-25/GMEF President Oliver Dulić explained that three keynote presentations would focus on current environmental and development challenges and opportunities, forthcoming international events, and the UN Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) report.

CSD-17 Chair Gerda Verburg, Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, the Netherlands, discussed the green revolution for sustainable agriculture in the context of environmental constraints. She proposed: investing more in sustainable agriculture; creating an enabling environment by fostering entrepreneurship, addressing land tenure, health and education; providing a sustainable production chain; improving market access, especially for developing countries; and providing food aid and a social safety net by empowering farmers with infrastructure, finance and risk protection against unreliable weather.

Freddy Numbery, Minister for Marine and Fisheries, Indonesia, highlighted the upcoming World Ocean Conference, aimed at developing an integrated and comprehensive picture of threats to oceans and addressing the impact of climate change.

Tadanori Inomata, JIU, presented the Joint Management Review of environmental governance within the United Nations System (UNEP/GC.25/INF/33), highlighting the high cost of institutional fragmentation. He enumerated the JIU's key recommendations as, *inter alia*, the need for: a clear understanding of the division of labor between UNEP and the MEAs; a strategic system-wide policy orientation for environmental protection and sustainable development led by the UN GA; integration of programme support funds for MEAs; and enhancing the coordination of capacity building activities. Supporting the JIU report, TANZANIA noted difficulties for developing countries to participate effectively in international programmes with more than 500 MEAs in existence. UGANDA called on UNEP to scale up successful experiences in the synergistic application of MEAs.

ALGERIA called for the implementation of a triennial plan for Africa and supported by KENYA, for pilot green economy projects. BRAZIL highlighted the success of its national ethanol programme. However, as BANGLADESH cautioned, a focus on biodiesel could divert attention from the urgent need to scale up food production. A representative of the WORKERS AND TRADE UNIONS major group said the new green deal should correct market imperfections and focus on jobs with social benefits.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

INTRODUCTION OF DRAFT DECISIONS: COW Chair John Matuzsak, US, proposed that, Jukka Ousukainen (Finland) assist him in chairing the COW, and delegates approved this. Juan Carlos Cue Vega, (Mexico), was elected Rapporteur, and Daniel Chuburu (Argentina), Chair of the Drafting Group. The COW approved its work programme (UNEP/GC.25/1/Add.1) and established a Working Group on the work programme and budget for the biennium 2010-2011, chaired by Agnes Kalibbala (Uganda) and a Chemicals Working Group, co-chaired by John Roberts (UK) and Festus Bagoora (Uganda).

Angela Cropper, UNEP Deputy Executive Director, highlighted key areas where progress could be accelerated: the science-policy platform for biodiversity and ecosystem services; chemicals, especially mercury; UNEP's programme of work and budget for 2010-2011, and its supplementary budget for 2008-2009. She stressed that science is at the core of UNEP's current work, and emphasized the importance of its MTS for 2010-2013.

UGANDA, Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR), introduced the draft decisions negotiated by that body (UNEP/GC.25/L.1). NIGERIA introduced the draft decisions on waste management and South-South cooperation.

SOUTH AFRICA introduced the draft decision on support to Africa. UNEP Deputy Executive Director Cropper introduced draft decisions regarding the state of the environment and chemicals management. The US announced support for launching negotiations for a legally-binding instrument on mercury in 2009, to be completed before GC-28 /GMEF in 2012. He said the instrument should only focus on mercury and address all significant sources, especially sectors with the greatest global impact including coal combustion.

POLICY ISSUES: On the issue of mercury, Nigeria, on behalf of the AFRICAN GROUP, supported immediate action. Noting the need to avoid the proliferation of new instruments, the EU, supported by URUGUAY, favored the development of a legally-binding instrument on mercury, with a mechanism to add new substances recognized as substances of global concern. JAPAN said there was currently no rationale for adding other substances, and, with CANADA, stressed that an intergovernmental negotiating committee (INC) should begin work as early as possible. AUSTRALIA supported a legally-binding instrument, but stressed that the focus be on mercury to mitigate the risk of losing momentum. BRAZIL called for a legally-binding instrument and emphasized the importance of a financial mechanism.

Serbia, on behalf of the EASTERN EUROPEAN GROUP, supported legally-binding measures on mercury. SWITZERLAND stressed the need for a legally-binding instrument with strong and flexible measures.

THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA supported a convention coupled with voluntary actions. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION, MAURITIUS, SENEGAL and JAMAICA supported Nigeria's proposed amendments and stressed the need for financial resources and technology for SIDS. INDIA said a legally-binding instrument was unnecessary, particularly on unintentional releases, but said it was "quite open" to discuss the issue. CHINA underscored the need for a gradual process and encouraged full use of the partnership mechanism. The Basel Convention Secretariat drew attention to its draft technical guidelines on the environmentally sound management of mercury waste. The Zero Mercury Working Group, the International POPs Elimination Network (IPEN) and Health Care Without Harm (HCWH) called for the mercury agreement to build on the OEWG suggested framework.

BUDGET AND PROGRAMME OF WORK: UNEP Deputy Executive Director Cropper introduced the seven documents on the programme budget. Consideration of this matter will continue on Tuesday.

CHEMICALS WORKING GROUP

Co-Chairs John Roberts (UK) and Festus Bagoora (Uganda) proposed, and delegates agreed, that the Co-Chairs would merge proposed decision texts from the Executive Director and the US, and proposed amendments from Nigeria and others to provide a basis for the group's discussion. The working group will reconvene on Tuesday.

IN THE BREEZEWAYS

A spirit of optimism characterized the mood of delegates on Monday. Those following the mercury issue marvelled at the incredible about turn of the US, which announced its support for the negotiation of a legally-binding instrument. Several NGOs said they were "floored," others were overheard to whisper "yes, we can," during the US announcement. Many observed that the debate no longer related to negotiating an MEA or to expanding voluntary measures, but to including a provision to add other hazardous substances, such as lead and cadmium, at a later stage. Several delegates praised the US agreement to join the bureau, which in their view reflected the enhanced spirit of engagement, currently prevailing in Washington.

GC-25/GMEF HIGHLIGHTS: TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2009

On Tuesday morning, GC-25/GMEF delegates convened in ministerial consultations and the Committee of the Whole (COW). In the afternoon, deliberations continued in the COW and in three parallel ministerial roundtable discussions on the theme: "Global crises: national chaos? Towards a green economy." Two contact groups, on the budget and programme of work for 2010-2011 and chemicals management, also met throughout the day. The drafting group on state of the environment and environmental law convened in the afternoon.

MINISTERIAL CONSULTATIONS

This session consisted of a keynote presentation and a panel discussion on "Global crises: national chaos? Towards a green economy."

KEYNOTE PRESENTATION: Pavan Sukdev, Green Economy Initiative, highlighted a green economy as a "new engine for growth" comprising renewable energy, building retrofits, sustainable transport and agriculture and ecological infrastructure. He underscored the need to protect the vulnerable, and, on policy, he emphasized: rethinking subsidies; rewarding unrecognized benefits; penalizing uncaptured costs; and sharing the benefits of conservation.

PANEL DISCUSSION: Sigmar Gabriel, Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, Germany, urged environment ministers to take the lead in the green economy, noting that they are the "ministers of sustainable economic success as well." He said that a stable political framework and a skilled workforce are essential preconditions for this.

Jacqueline Cramer, Minister for Environment and Space, the Netherlands, underscored urgent action and requested UNEP to draw up a "green economy action list" to guide decision makers. UNEP Executive Director Steiner confirmed this would be finalized in time for the G-20 Summit.

Byung-Wook Lee, Vice-Minister for Environment, Republic of Korea, reported on measures taken under the new low carbon economic growth strategy, which includes investing 38 billion dollars in the environmental sector.

Observing that "if we all take risks together, there is no risk," Hasan Mahmud, State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Bangladesh, urged support for developing countries in their transition to a green economy.

Stanislav Ananiev, Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, Russian Federation, stressed that international discussions should consider differing country circumstances to develop a shared vision for sustainable development.

Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker, International Panel for Sustainable Resource Management, urged governments to be more proactive in creating incentives to reduce carbon emissions and investment in renewable and efficient energy and production. David Foster, Blue-Green Alliance, called for investments in smart, sustainable solutions, such as creating jobs in the green sector.

In the ensuing discussion, UGANDA pointed to the difficulty of addressing the urban transport sector in a deregulated economy, and accessing the Clean Development Mechanism funds to support such efforts. Cramer responded by stressing the need to mobilize additional support for developing countries, while Mahmud emphasized investing in urban rail infrastructure. On mobilizing support, Gabriel reiterated the need for an enabling environment, and discussed the role of international environmental standards and increasing interaction with the WTO. BRAZIL, however, called for the removal of trade distorting subsidies and opposed international environmental standards that could harm exports. MALAYSIA said better market access for poor countries influences their ability to invest in sustainable development. Emphasizing the private sector's role on the issue of finance, Sukdev also underscored eliminating perverse subsidies on the pricing and production of fossil fuels.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH major group urged governments to act now and consider meaningful and concrete measures to implement a global green economy. The INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS urged support for sustainable production to enhance rural livelihoods.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

POLICY ISSUES: State of the environment: COSTA RICA introduced its draft decision on recognizing the Earth Charter as an important ethical framework for promoting and implementing sustainable development, which will be discussed on Wednesday.

Regarding the draft decision on the intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity, there was general support for convening a second meeting, which the REPUBLIC OF KOREA offered to host in June 2009. The US, supported by CANADA and BRAZIL, called for further consideration of the gap analysis. SENEGAL urged establishing the platform as soon as possible. The EU said the draft decision did not

accurately reflect the Putrajaya recommendations and proposed amendments. CHINA favored improving existing mechanisms and structures. BRAZIL, supported by COLOMBIA, said a new panel should only be established under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). JAPAN saw merit in constituting a panel outside the CBD but would not rule out any options.

On environmental law, the secretariat introduced the relevant documents and the draft decision. Delegates generally welcomed the Fourth Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environment Law. CHINA said the Programme should be more focused and give special consideration to capacity building. The US said it would offer specific amendments to the liability guidelines. The EU suggested that guidelines on access to information and liability would assist developing countries. JAPAN called for examination of the technical issues involved in the guidelines, before adopting them at the next GC special session. ARGENTINA favored implementation of existing legislation, rather than creating new laws.

International environmental governance: The Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) introduced its report "Management Review of the Environmental Governance of the United Nations System."

INDONESIA called for UNEP to be strengthened, with a focus on capacity building and implementing the Bali Strategic Plan. CANADA emphasized the importance of universal membership of the GC and the mainstreaming of the Bali Strategic Plan. URUGUAY stressed the importance of the "One UN" initiative in addressing fragmentation on environment issues at the national and international levels. BRAZIL said the UN GA is the proper locus for decisions on IEG. The US suggested it was premature to take a decision on the JIU report, and that IEG should focus on implementation, a responsibility that lies with national governments. CHINA observed that improving synergies between MEAs is a gradual process that should avoid additional costs. COLOMBIA said the possibility of a new IEG architecture should not be discarded. The EU noted increased institutional fragmentation, and urged full implementation of the Cartagena package.

Delegates heard a secretariat presentation on the Environmental Management Group.

DRAFT DECISIONS: The secretariat introduced the omnibus draft decision, (UNEP/GC.25/L.1), which suggests taking note of the Executive Director's reports on waste management, SIDS, support to Africa, South-South cooperation and water policy.

BUDGET AND PROGRAMME OF WORK: The EU, supported by NORWAY, welcomed the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) consultations. SERBIA emphasized that the new programme of work should not overlook ongoing activities at the subregional level in southeastern Europe. The US commended UNEP's reform efforts and increased transparency, urging further consultations on a number of aspects. JAPAN called for budget categorization and prioritization to be subject to frequent review. SWITZERLAND said countries should be urged to increase their contributions based on the voluntary indicative scale of contributions. INDONESIA emphasized the importance of the Bali Strategic Plan in prioritizing budget resources. Remaining issues were deferred to the budget contact group.

DRAFTING GROUP

During deliberations on the draft decision on the world environment situation, the drafting group heard a proposal on the creation of an intergovernmental advisory group to work with stakeholders in conducting a global environmental assessment of environmental change. This raised questions regarding the proposed group's composition, mandate, value and purpose. On

the draft decision concerning environmental law, under the Fourth Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law, discussion centered around the possible duplication of work already being conducted by the UNFCCC, with delegates agreeing to respect the work of UNFCCC and other MEAs. Work on both draft decisions will be continued on Wednesday.

CONTACT GROUPS

CHEMICALS: Delegates discussed the draft decision on mercury, synthesized by Co-Chairs John Roberts (UK) and Festus Bagoora (Uganda), paragraph-by-paragraph. Most delegations supported developing a legally-binding instrument and taking a decision to form an intergovernmental negotiating committee (INC). CHINA, supported by INDIA, preferred to remove the operative paragraphs, and defer any decision on forming an INC to GC-27/GMEF, but agreed to continue negotiating on the basis that the operative text was bracketed.

NORWAY, supported by NIGERIA, MEXICO, URUGUAY and the EU proposed language "recognising that the instrument could in the future be extended to additional substances." This was opposed by the US, CANADA, CHINA and INDONESIA, who stressed the instrument should relate only to mercury. NORWAY agreed to consult bilaterally on this issue.

INDIA, CHINA and INDONESIA supported a focus on intentional mercury emissions. SWITZERLAND agreed that different responses were necessary for unintentional and intentional emissions, but stressed that all mercury emissions must be addressed under the legally-binding instrument.

The co-chairs will produce a revised draft decision reflecting all proposals and amendments for discussion on Wednesday.

Delegates also briefly considered the draft decisions on lead and cadmium and SAICM. After a general exchange of views, the co-chairs agreed to reflect all comments in a revised draft decision Wednesday.

BUDGET AND PROGRAMME OF WORK: The UNEP Secretariat introduced the three draft decisions on: proposed biennial programme and support budget for the biennium 2010-2011; management of trust funds and earmarked contributions; and the supplementary budget. Delegates agreed on management of trust funds and the supplementary budget, acknowledging that it had already been discussed extensively by the CPR. They then proceeded with a first reading of the draft decision and agreed on the preambular text and several operational paragraphs. Chair Kalibbala requested the US, EU, Norway and G-77/China to propose language to expedite agreement on the remaining paragraphs on Wednesday.

IN THE BREEZEWAYS

Discussion of the future global environmental architecture seems to be undergoing resurgence at the Governing Council. Debate is currently centering on a secretariat-produced three-page non-paper, outlining two options for re-launching the stalled IEG process. On Tuesday, the COW avoided discussing the non-paper: delegates were unsure of how to handle it, some were apparently unaware of its existence, and discussion was relegated to the breezeways. One delegate saw a reason for hope in that the new US administration has not yet finalized a position on the issue.

Some delegates were heard referring to a probable group of "friendly ministers," who could aid the flagging UN GA consultations, chaired by the Swiss and Mexican Ambassadors in New York.

Could this GC/GMEF realistically initiate a new robust consultative effort leading to a constructive finale at the 64th session of the GA, and ideally, a new status for UNEP? This was the question being touted in Gigiri on Tuesday.

GC-25/GMEF HIGHLIGHTS: WEDNESDAY, 18 FEBRUARY 2009

On Wednesday morning, GC-25/GMEF delegates convened in ministerial consultations and the Committee of the Whole (COW). In the afternoon, deliberations continued in the COW, and ministers also attended a meeting on climate change organized by the Government of Denmark. Two contact groups, on the budget and programme of work for 2010-2011 and on chemicals management, as well as the drafting group, met throughout the day. An informal group on support to Africa also convened in the afternoon.

MINISTERIAL CONSULTATIONS

This session consisted of three keynote presentations and a panel discussion on “Global crises: national chaos? Coping with multiple challenges and capturing opportunities.”

KEYNOTE PRESENTATIONS: Robert Watson, University of East Anglia, UK, highlighted key linkages between climate change and other environmental issues. On the global context of food security, he pointed to trade distorting policies, OECD subsidies and land policy conflicts. He outlined the multifunctionality of agriculture, suggested hunger can be addressed with appropriate use of existing tools, and emphasized the need to eliminate perverse subsidies and internalize externalities. Watson underscored cost-effective and equitable solutions to address issues such as climate change and biodiversity loss, stressing political will and moral leadership.

Khalid Al-Irani, Minister of Environment, Jordan, emphasized investment at the ecosystem level to keep the resource base functional, and said the benefits of technologies such as biofuels and genetically modified organisms are debatable. Al-Irani highlighted his country’s efforts as part of the environmental reform process and its paradigm shift in terms of energy policy planning.

Ligia Castro de Doens, Minister of Environment, Panama, discussed the challenge of setting strategic objectives for a new model of environmental management that reduces poverty, improves income distribution, maintains economic growth, and strengthens democracy and citizen participation.

PANEL DISCUSSION: Batilda Burian, Minister of State for Environment, Tanzania, outlined her country’s key environmental challenges, noting the preparation of National Adaptation Programmes of Action and mobilization of resources at the national level.

Erik Solheim, Minister of Environment and Development Cooperation, Norway, emphasized the carbon market is the most effective means of generating financial resources, and the need for broader thinking on payments for ecosystem services.

Hilary Benn, Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, UK, discussed the “crisis of sustainability,” explaining the credit crunch is a product of unsustainable lending and that climate change is caused by unsustainable emissions of carbon dioxide. He emphasized the need to invest in low carbon agriculture, proper storage and transport.

Jean-Louis Borloo, Minister of Ecology, Energy Sustainable Development and Land Planning, France, highlighted the EU’s climate package consisting of a commitment to a 20% cut in emissions of greenhouse gases by 2020, compared with 1990 levels; a 20% increase in the share of renewables in the energy mix; and a 20% cut in energy consumption.

Jos Delbeke, Deputy Director-General, EC, highlighted the EU emissions trading scheme and the harmonization of policies on products such as clean cars and fuels.

Yvo de Boer, Executive Secretary, UNFCCC, acknowledged positive signs evident in financial crisis recovery packages, which include consideration of climate, energy and sustainability. He urged delegates to use the nine months in the lead up to the climate change talks in Copenhagen to “unlock the financial puzzle” so that the pieces can fall into place.

During the ensuing discussion, delegates highlighted: national circumstances; food security; water and energy in the context of climate change; the role of technology, the private sector, and capacity development; mobilizing financial resources under the climate change regime; and financing as the key to addressing the ongoing challenges.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

POLICY ISSUES: State of the environment: The COW considered four reports: SIDS; UNEP’s water policy and strategy; South-South cooperation in achieving sustainable development; and waste management.

Delegates adopted the reports following general comments, before turning to the related omnibus draft decision.

Regarding South-South cooperation, delegates agreed on all but one of the operative paragraphs on resource mobilization. Chair Uosukainen invited the G-77/China, the EU, US and others to consult in an informal drafting group.

On waste management, due to the large number of amendments, Chair Uosukainen requested and delegates agreed to consult informally.

Regarding support to Africa, South Africa introduced draft text and several delegations called for the decision to be aligned more closely with the MTS. An informal group facilitated by Chair Kalibbala was established and convened in the afternoon.

Costa Rica withdrew its draft decision on the Earth Charter, to avoid overlaps with the Bali Strategic Plan.

Coordination and cooperation with major groups: UNEP Deputy Executive Director Angela Cropper presented the final review report of the long-term strategy on the engagement and involvement of young people in environmental issues. She requested delegates to endorse its second long-term strategy in which youth activities have been more closely aligned to the six cross-cutting priorities in the MTS 2010-2013. Following statements by youth representatives, delegates endorsed the new strategy.

Contribution of UNEP as an implementing agency of GEF: The UNEP Secretariat tabled a document on the status of the Environment Fund, noting that more than 400 UNEP-implemented projects have been approved since the first GEF replenishment. The Secretariat, however, reported that UNEP's share of GEF funding had fallen by 7% during the fourth replenishment. While expressing support for UNEP's activities, the US underscored the need for further GEF reform, including establishment of an independent monitoring entity, to restore donor confidence.

Coordination and cooperation with the UN system on environmental matters: The COW heard a report on UNEP's role in the "One UN" Initiative including its leadership on water, energy and climate change activities.

DRAFTING GROUP

On an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services (IPBES), delegates welcomed proposals to establish a tentative 2010 deadline to report on progress and the draft decision was forwarded to the COW.

Regarding the world environment situation, the group considered additional text proposed by the EU under future global assessment of environmental change. Delegates voiced concern about the cost of integrated and thematic UNEP assessments, and sought clarification on whether such assessments would be covered under the programme of work and budget. Agreement was reached on strengthening the policy relevance of the next Global Environment Outlook (GEO-5).

On environmental law, views were polarized over the adoption of guidelines for the development of national legislation on access to information, public participation and access to justice in environmental matters, and the issue remains outstanding.

Regarding IEG, several delegates proposed language to contextualize the follow-up to paragraph 169 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome on UN system-wide coherence. However, others felt that opening discussion on this would duplicate ongoing discussion in a parallel session and the issue was not debated.

CONTACT AND INFORMAL GROUPS

CHEMICALS: Delegates negotiated the revised draft decision on mercury paragraph-by-paragraph. On operational provisions to be developed by the INC, agreement on the use of mandatory or discretionary language in the chapeau could not be reached. Several delegations, including the US, CANADA and AUSTRALIA, but opposed by SOUTH AFRICA, preferred not to prescribe the work of the INC. Co-Chair Roberts suggested, and delegates agreed, to consult bilaterally. Delegates reached agreement that the INC is to consider several elements, but after an extensive exchange, discussion on the precise elements was deferred.

Contentious issues included: references to IEG and to common but differentiated responsibilities; according the INC the flexibility to consider an instrument that could address other substances of global concern; the need for the INC to consider priority-setting for intentional or anthropogenic sources; and the time frame for initiation of the INC. These issues were referred for discussion in a Friends of the Chair Group, comprising the US, China, the EU, India, Serbia, Nigeria, Argentina, Japan and Norway, scheduled to convene throughout Wednesday night.

In the afternoon delegates discussed the draft decision on SAICM. The section on financing and inviting the International Conference on Chemicals Management to find a solution for mid- and long-term funding were controversial. The US and JAPAN preferred to negotiate SAICM-related issues at the ICCM-2 and not at GC-27/GMEF. NORWAY and the AFRICAN GROUP, however, stressed the need to identify innovative ways to find funding for SAICM once the time-limited Quick Start Programme ends. Discussion on this issue will continue on Thursday.

BUDGET AND PROGRAMME OF WORK: The Group continued working paragraph-by-paragraph through the draft decision on the proposed biennial programme and support budget for the biennium 2010-2011. A small drafting group consisting of JAPAN, the EU, US, NORWAY and others met to work on text relating to transparency, consultations and prioritization, and delegates subsequently accepted the revised language.

SUPPORT TO AFRICA: The group chaired by Agnes Kalibbala (Uganda), reviewed the draft decision and in its first reading substantially reworked the text. A chapeau was added to clarify that the entire decision must be implemented "within the context of the approved budget and programme of work" for 2010-2011 and the MTS. The group debated whether a paragraph calling on UNEP to assist countries in implementing regional conventions was appropriate for a GC decision. A paragraph on supporting an African climate policy center at the UN Economic Commission on Africa was bracketed due to uncertainty about funding and possible budget implications. Language calling on UNEP to publish on a regular basis "Africa: Atlas of Our Changing Environment," was deemed impractical by many; an alternate US proposal that UNEP help African nations develop their own capacities to prepare national environmental atlases was resisted by the African Group. The group will consider a revised decision on Thursday.

IN THE BREEZEWAYS

The closed ministerial meeting on climate change on Wednesday afternoon ("Head of delegation plus one from each country") left some participants with mixed feelings. The gathering, an initiative of the Danish Government, was originally placed outside the GC-25 order of business. No specific outcome was planned, with the idea seemingly being to engage ministers of environment, present in Nairobi. Attendees who expected the meeting to add value to upcoming climate negotiations were probably discouraged, but most participants said they appreciated the exchange, while others thought that organizing the meeting on UNEP's turf could benefit a resurgent UNEP.

Discussions in the breezeways indicated that group of "friendly ministers" was making good progress towards a decision on IEG and planned to consult regional groups overnight, before continuing work on Thursday.

Meanwhile on mercury, emotions ran high. As eight country representatives, and eight "friends," braced themselves for a long night of negotiations in a Friends of the Chair Group, some resented being excluded, while others contended that the group may be joined by a high-level surprise guest, keen to lend support to achieving an outcome.

GC-25/GMEF HIGHLIGHTS: THURSDAY, 19 FEBRUARY 2009

On Thursday morning, GC-25/GMEF delegates convened in ministerial consultations, the Committee of the Whole (COW) and in an informal group on support to Africa. In the afternoon, deliberations continued in the COW, and in three parallel roundtable discussions on “IEG-Help or hindrance? – IEG from a country perspective.” The drafting group and the chemicals management contact group also met throughout the day.

MINISTERIAL CONSULTATIONS

This session consisted of a keynote presentation and a panel discussion on IEG from a country perspective.

KEYNOTE PRESENTATION: Marthinus Van Schalkwyk, Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, South Africa, expressed frustration with the “lack of fundamental reform or even incremental progress” on IEG and emphasized that maintaining the present IEG status quo was untenable.

He said questions relating to form and structure must follow function to avoid an inward-looking dialogue and weaker UNEP mandate. Van Schalkwyk emphasized the need to set clear milestones over the next three years, and for a political declaration to come out of the next GC special session to guide further work in the run-up to Rio+20.

PANEL DISCUSSION: Andreas Carlgren, Minister for the Environment, Sweden, discussed the lack of trust between developing and developed countries regarding delivering on commitments. He called for a new flexible governance mechanism and enhanced coordination of the UN system.

Faumuita Liuga, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, Samoa, said the challenge for the GC/GMEF is to promote environmental sustainability as a basis for economic recovery and financial growth. He called for UNEP regional offices to be upgraded and for more authority to be delegated to them.

John Michuki, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Kenya, observed that IEG should ensure full consideration of developing country needs and challenges and should not place unrealistic demands on governments and the UN system. He called on developed countries to honor ODA commitments and to provide new and additional financial resources.

Roberto Dobles Mora, Minister of Environment, Energy and Telecommunications, Costa Rica, acknowledged agreement to strengthen UNEP but divergence on the degree of transformation and specific actions to be taken.

Ana Maria Sampaio Fernandes, Brazil, called for a solution that helps countries to implement sustainable development and action that integrates environmental, social and economic pillars.

Kevin Conrad, Coalition for Rainforest Nations, emphasized that it is “time to reframe environmental theory before talking about governance” and to “consider environmental incentives before restrictions.” He underscored that the environment cannot be protected until it is correctly valued.

During the ensuing discussion many delegates drew attention to the lack of coherence in environmental governance. They pointed to the need to strengthen UNEP in order to improve implementation and for enhanced coordination and synergistic approaches at the institutional level.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

POLICY ISSUES: State of the environment: JAPAN tabled a draft decision inviting governments and relevant organizations to participate in activities to commemorate the International Year of Biodiversity in 2010 and calling on UNEP to coordinate such efforts. BRAZIL, supported by the EU, COLOMBIA, CANADA, MEXICO, INDONESIA and NORWAY, welcomed the opportunity to refocus attention on the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), further noting that the decision should reflect agreed WSSD language on an international regime on fair and equitable benefit-sharing by 2010. KAZAKHSTAN called for reference to economies in transition. Chair Uosukainen invited interested delegations to submit additional proposals to the drafting group for discussion in the afternoon.

Waste management: Delegates agreed the revised decision submitted by the informal working group.

South-South cooperation: The G-77/CHINA and the EU reported that they had agreed compromise language referring to “necessary adequate resources.”

IPBES: The draft decision as amended by the drafting group was accepted.

Environmental Situation in the Gaza Strip: Algeria, on behalf of the ARAB STATES, presented the draft decision which the COW approved.

Support to Africa: Delegates accepted the revised text submitted by the informal working group.

Chemicals management including mercury: The COW approved the draft decision submitted by the Contact Group on Chemicals Management.

Environmental Law: The COW considered the draft decision submitted by the drafting group, which was accepted after deleting a reference to the EU law on environmental liability.

INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE: The COW briefly discussed the draft but referred it to an informal group for further consideration.

PROGRAMME OF WORK AND BUDGET: The COW agreed the three decisions prepared by the Contact Group on the Programme of work and budget as amended.

DATE AND VENUE OF FUTURE SESSIONS: Introducing this draft decision the UNEP Secretariat noted that the dates and venue of the 11th special session of the GC/GMEF in 2010, and the dates of the 26th GC/GMEF in Nairobi in 2011, would be decided in consultation with the Bureau and CPR. The decision was agreed.

DRAFTING GROUP

The group revisited draft decisions on IEG, environmental law and the world environment situation, and reviewed Japan's proposed decision on the International Year of Biodiversity. Regarding IEG, consensus was finally reached and the draft decision forwarded to the COW.

On the world environment situation, the group debated convening an intergovernmental meeting, but some delegates said the proposed meeting would duplicate the tasks of the already-operational second intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder consultative forum. The draft decision was eventually agreed and, with the draft decision on environmental law, was forwarded to the COW.

Regarding Japan's draft decision on the International Year of Biodiversity, discussion centered on making reference to the CBD. Following extensive consultations the group agreed to a compromise draft to be forwarded to the COW.

CONTACT AND INFORMAL GROUPS

CHEMICALS: The Friends of the Chair Group convened overnight on Wednesday and resolved several contentious issues, including: agreement to elaborate a legally-binding instrument on mercury; commencing the work of the first intergovernmental negotiating committee (INC) in 2010, with the goal of completing work by 2013; and that the INC would address anthropogenic sources of mercury.

The contact group consulted informally on the outstanding issues of references to the Rio Principles, and to leaving the door "faintly open" or "closed" to other chemicals of global concern. Informal consultations continued throughout the afternoon and delegates eventually agreed to a "faint hint" of an open door, by recognizing the mandate of the INC may be supplemented by further decisions of the GC.

Regarding the Rio Principles, delegates agreed to a reference to Principle 7 on common but differentiated responsibilities, but removed language on the INC specifying principles underpinning the instrument.

On mandating the INC to specify arrangements for capacity building, technical and financial assistance, views differed over an Indian proposal to include reference to "committed financial assistance," which the EU rejected. After lengthy consultations, delegates agreed to recognize that the ability of developing countries and countries with economies in transition to implement some legal obligations effectively under a legally binding instrument is dependent on the availability of capacity building, and technical and adequate financial assistance.

Regarding SAICM, delegates agreed that the ICCM will discuss ways to promote further progress in implementation of SAICM as well as approaches for mid- and long-term financing.

On lead and cadmium, delegates agreed to delete a reference to the 2006 Budapest Statement on Mercury, Lead and Cadmium. The decision on chemicals management was forwarded to the COW.

SUPPORT TO AFRICA: During informal consultations chaired by Agnes Kalibbala, delegates proposed language stating that UNEP should provide technical support to the African climate policy center, "once established." On follow-up to *Africa: Atlas of our Changing Environment*, delegates agreed that the Atlas should be updated "as appropriate." Language was agreed calling on UNEP to seek extrabudgetary funds for implementing the MTS in "a more coordinated and coherent manner for greater impact in Africa." SOUTH AFRICA proposed, and delegates accepted, a preambular reference to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and a regional dialogue on climate change. The decision was forwarded to the COW.

IN THE BREEZEWAYS I

A sleepless night failed to dampen delegates' enthusiasm for the finalization of the decision on mercury. Several said the agreement ushered in a new dawn for international environmental policy. A resurgence of goodwill and hope was palpable, as delegates applauded the spirit of compromise shown by all countries, and commended the dedication and unflinching support of the UNEP Chemicals team and the Co-Chairs. Noting everyone was stretched to their limits, one delegate said some "will go home with a tear in their eye, as well as a smile on their face," knowing that they had agreed to work towards reducing the global risk of mercury to human health and the environment through a legally binding instrument.

IN THE BREEZEWAYS II

There appeared to be a lingering feeling among various African delegations, that with ministerial discussions dominated by developed countries showcasing 21st century "green economy" innovations, the disconnect with the political and institutional reality "back home" was all too apparent. One delegate opined the "extreme difficulty" in obtaining political buy-in for the necessary changes in a deregulated developing country context, and questioned how UNEP's effort to become a leader in a crises-ridden world could benefit developing countries.

ENB SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS: The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* summary and analysis of GC-25/GMEF will be available on Monday, 23 February 2009, online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/unepgc/25unepgc/>

SUMMARY OF THE 25TH SESSION OF THE UNEP GOVERNING COUNCIL/GLOBAL MINISTERIAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM: 16-20 FEBRUARY 2009

The 25th session of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC-25/GMEF) took place from 16-20 February 2009, at the UN Office in Nairobi, Kenya. Over 1000 participants from 147 countries, including 110 ministers, representatives of UN agencies, international organizations, academia, NGOs, business and industry, and women and youth organizations, attended the week-long gathering.

During the week, delegates convened in plenary sessions, a Committee of the Whole, a drafting group, and several contact groups to consider draft decisions. From Monday to Thursday, ministerial consultations addressed the themes of “Global crises: national chaos?” and “International environmental governance: help or hindrance?” The GC/GMEF concluded its work by adopting 17 decisions on issues relating to, *inter alia*, chemicals management including mercury; the world environment situation; international environmental governance; environmental law; intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity; support to Africa in environmental management and protection; and the environmental situation in Gaza. The GC/GMEF also approved the budget and work programme for the 2010-2011 biennium.

Many delegates expressed satisfaction with the organization of work and the successful conclusion of the proceedings, which culminated in the adoption of a historic decision to elaborate a legally binding instrument on mercury through the work of an intergovernmental negotiating committee. Delegates also welcomed the decision on the establishment of a ministerial consultative process on international environmental governance. The sense of satisfaction apparent on the faces of weary delegates as they trooped out of the UN complex in Nairobi on Friday afternoon spoke volumes: there was clear consensus that this meeting represented a major accomplishment for UNEP and its Governing Council.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF UNEP GC/GMEF

As a result of the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment, the UN General Assembly (UNGA), in its resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 1972, officially established UNEP as the central UN node for global environmental cooperation and treaty making. The resolution also established the UNEP Governing Council (GC) to provide a forum for the international community to address major and emerging environmental policy issues. The GC’s responsibilities include the promotion of international environmental cooperation and the recommendation of policies to achieve it, and the provision of policy guidance for the direction and coordination of environmental programmes in the UN system. The GC reports to the UNGA, which also elects the GC’s 58 members for four-year terms, taking into account the principle of equitable regional representation. The GMEF is constituted by the GC as envisaged in UNGA resolution 53/242. The purpose of the GMEF is to institute, at a high political level, a process for reviewing important and emerging policy issues in the field of the environment.

GC-19: The session convened in two parts from 27 January - 7 February 1997 and from 3-4 April 1997 at UNEP headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. Delegates adopted the Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of UNEP, which expanded the mandate

IN THIS ISSUE

A Brief History of UNEP GC/GMEF	1
Report of the Meeting	3
Ministerial Consultations	3
Committee of the Whole	6
GC-25/GMEF Decisions	6
Closing Plenary	12
A Brief Analysis of GC-25/GMEF	13
Upcoming Meetings	15
Glossary	16

This issue of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* © <enb@iisd.org> is written and edited by Asheline Appleton, Melanie Ashton, Tallash Kantai, Wangu Mwangi, Keith Ripley, and Andrey Vavilov, Ph.D. The Digital Editor is Francis Dejon. The Editor is Pamela S. Chasek, Ph.D. <pam@iisd.org> and the Director of IISD Reporting Services is Langston James “Kimo” Goree VI <kimo@iisd.org>. The Sustaining Donors of the *Bulletin* are the United Kingdom (through the Department for International Development – DFID), the Government of the United States of America (through the Department of State Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs), the Government of Canada (through CIDA), the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU), the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the European Commission (DG-ENV), and the Italian Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea. General Support for the *Bulletin* during 2009 is provided by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Government of Australia, the Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, the Ministry of Environment of Sweden, the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, SWAN International, Swiss Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN), the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Japanese Ministry of Environment (through the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies - IGES), the Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (through the Global Industrial and Social Progress Research Institute - GISPRI), and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Funding for translation of the *Bulletin* into French has been provided by the International Organization of the Francophonie (IOF). Funding for the translation of the *Bulletin* into Spanish has been provided by the Ministry of Environment of Spain. The opinions expressed in the *Bulletin* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of IISD or other donors. Excerpts from the *Bulletin* may be used in non-commercial publications with appropriate academic citation. For information on the *Bulletin*, including requests to provide reporting services, contact the Director of IISD Reporting Services at <kimo@iisd.org>, +1-646-536-7556 or 300 East 56th St., 11A, New York, New York 10022, USA.

to include: analyzing the state of the global environment; assessing global and regional environmental trends; providing policy advice and early warning information on environmental threats; and catalyzing and promoting international cooperation and action, based on the best scientific and technical capabilities available.

GC-20: This session took place from 1-5 February 1999, in Nairobi, and adopted over 30 decisions on a range of topics, including: the Environment Fund, administrative and budgetary matters; linkages among and support to environmental and environment-related conventions; and policy issues, including the state of the environment, coordination and cooperation within and outside the UN, UNEP governance and emerging policy issues.

GCSS-6 /GMEF: The sixth Special Session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum took place from 29-31 May 2000, in Malmö, Sweden. Ministers adopted the Malmö Ministerial Declaration, which agreed that the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) should review the requirements for a greatly strengthened institutional structure for international environmental governance (IEG).

GC-21/GMEF: This meeting took place from 5-9 February 2001, in Nairobi. Delegates established the Open-ended Intergovernmental Group of Ministers or Their Representatives (IGM) to undertake a comprehensive policy-oriented assessment of existing institutional weaknesses, as well as future needs and options for strengthening IEG. They also adopted decision 21/7, which requests the UNEP Executive Director to examine the need for a strategic approach to international chemicals management (SAICM).

GCSS-7/GMEF: This meeting was held from 13-15 February 2002, in Cartagena, Colombia. In its decision SS.VII/1, the GC/GMEF adopted the IGM report, which contains recommendations aimed at strengthening IEG, including through: improved coherence in international environmental policy-making; strengthening the role and financial situation of UNEP; improved coordination among and effectiveness of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs); and capacity building, technology transfer and country-level coordination. Delegates also adopted decisions related to, *inter alia*, SAICM at the global level.

WSSD: The WSSD was held from 26 August - 4 September 2002, in Johannesburg, South Africa. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) sets out a framework for action to implement the commitments originally agreed at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. The JPOI, among other things, emphasized that the international community should fully implement the outcomes of decision SS.VII/1 on IEG.

GC-22/GMEF: This meeting took place from 3-7 February 2003, in Nairobi. Delegates adopted more than 40 decisions on issues relating to IEG, post-conflict environmental assessment, UNEP's water policy and strategy, SAICM, a mercury programme, support to Africa, production and consumption patterns, and the environment and cultural diversity.

GCSS-8/GMEF: This meeting took place from 29-31 March 2004, in Jeju, Republic of Korea. At the conclusion of the ministerial consultations, delegates adopted the "Jeju Initiative,"

containing the Chair's summary of the discussions and decisions on: SIDS; waste management; regional annexes; and the implementation of decision SS.VII/1 on IEG.

GC-23/GMEF: This meeting took place from 21-25 February 2005, in Nairobi. Ministers considered the implementation of internationally agreed development goals, and adopted decisions on, among other things: the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building; IEG; chemicals management; UNEP's water policy and strategy; gender equality and the environment; poverty and the environment; and strengthening environmental emergency response and developing disaster prevention, preparedness, mitigation and early warning systems.

2005 WORLD SUMMIT: The 2005 World Summit was held at UN headquarters in New York from 14-16 September. Delegates recognized the need for more efficient environmental activities in the UN system, through, *inter alia*, enhanced coordination, improved policy advice and guidance, and strengthened scientific knowledge. They further agreed to explore the possibility of a more coherent institutional framework, including a more integrated structure, building on existing institutions and internationally agreed instruments, as well as treaty bodies and UN specialized agencies.

ICCM: The International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM) was held from 4-6 February 2006, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, immediately prior to GCSS-9/GMEF. At the ICCM, delegates completed negotiations and adopted the SAICM, including a high-level declaration, overarching policy strategy and global plan of action.

GCSS-9/GMEF: This meeting was held from 7-9 February 2006, in Dubai. Ministerial consultations addressed, *inter alia*, policy issues relating to energy and environment, chemicals management, and tourism and the environment. The plenary discussion on environmental governance, outcome of the 2005 World Summit, and GC universal membership did not produce an agreed outcome, and delegates decided that the report of the meeting should reflect the divergence of views expressed.

GC-24/GMEF: This meeting convened from 5-9 February 2007, in Nairobi. Delegates adopted 15 decisions on issues relating, *inter alia*, to: chemicals, including a provision to establish the *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) to Review and Assess Measures to Address the Global Issue of Mercury; the world environmental situation; IEG; South-South cooperation; waste management; 2010-2020 UN Decade for Deserts and the Fight Against Desertification; UNEP's updated water policy and strategy; and support to Africa in environmental management and protection.

GCSS-10/GMEF: This meeting convened from 20-22 February 2008, in the Principality of Monaco. Ministerial consultations addressed the emerging policy issues of mobilizing finance to meet the climate challenge, and IEG and UN reform. The GC/GMEF adopted five decisions on: the UNEP Medium-term Strategy 2010-2013; chemicals management, including mercury and waste management; the GEO; sustainable development of the Arctic region; and the International Decade for Combating Climate Change.

REPORT OF THE MEETING

On Monday, 16 February 2009, Roberto Dobles, Minister of Environment, Costa Rica and President of the 24th session of the Governing Council/ Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC/GMEF), welcomed delegates and noted several achievements, including the completion of the 2010-2013 UNEP Medium-term Strategy (MTS), which he said provided clear vision and direction for UNEP.

Angela Cropper, Deputy Executive Secretary, UNEP, read a message on behalf of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stressing the importance of the GC/GMEF process and highlighting GC leadership on mercury and the need for a green economy.

Inga Klevby, Deputy Executive Director, UN-HABITAT, explained that cities are a driving force for global trade, but that they also generate the bulk of waste. Pointing to conventional wisdom predicting the economic downturn will lead to fewer jobs, she challenged delegates to see the situation as an opportunity.

UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner said UNEP challenges the myth that, when the economy is in crisis, environment and social issues take a back seat. He stressed that environment is part of the solution, and highlighted the green economy and the need for a green new deal. The environment ministers assembled at the GC/GMEF, he noted, have a unique opportunity to inspire and guide the global economic agenda.

Mwai Kibaki, President of the Republic of Kenya, called for greater vigor in addressing current environmental problems, for a global partnership for sustainable development, and moving to a green and low-carbon economy. He referred to the importance of strengthening global environmental governance, particularly in the field of compliance with existing multilateral agreements.

The plenary elected Oliver Dulić, Minister of Environment, Serbia, as GC-25/GMEF President. Other Bureau members elected were: Mohamed Cherif Rahmani (Algeria), Juan Carlos Cué Vega (Mexico), and John Matuszak (US), as Vice-Presidents; and Budi Bowolekssono (Indonesia) as Rapporteur.

GC-25/GMEF President Oliver Dulić said events in 2008 demonstrated that environmental investment is the way to sustainable economic growth, and the GMEF should shape solutions to move the world forward. He declared his intention to use the President's Summary toward that end, and urged the drafting group to begin work Monday afternoon. The plenary then adopted the draft agenda (UNEP/GC/25/1 and Add.1/Rev.1) and agreed on the GC-25/GMEF's organization of work.

During the week, GC-25/GMEF convened in parallel ministerial consultations and the Committee of the Whole (COW), chaired by Jukka Uosukainen (Finland). The COW established a drafting group, chaired by Daniel Chuburu (Argentina) and several contact groups, which met throughout the week to consider draft decisions.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S POLICY STATEMENT:

In his Policy Statement, Executive Director Steiner outlined a range of enabling reforms undertaken by UNEP as part of its Medium-term Strategy (MTS) 2010-2013, noting the focus should not be on mobilizing finances to address global crises, but rather on the manner in which such funds are invested, which will have a direct bearing on the resolution and mitigation of other environment and development challenges. He cited

UNEP's programmatic achievements over the past two years including, *inter alia*: the launch of the Global Green New Deal and the Green Economy Initiative; enhancing delivery on the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building; mainstreaming results-based management; and improving collaboration with more than 15 UN agencies under the One UN Initiative. Steiner announced the appointment of Professor Joseph Alcamo as UNEP's first Chief Scientist and informed delegates that in 2008 UNEP became a carbon neutral organization.

During the ensuing interventions, Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China (G-77/China), stressed that a green economy must be pro-development and pro-poor, and urged developed countries to honor commitments and resist protectionist measures. The Czech Republic, for the European Union (EU), praised UNEP for responding quickly to the global financial crisis with the Green Economy Initiative. He welcomed the opportunity to discuss international environmental governance, and said the EU wanted an institutional architecture with the ability to address wide threats in a globalizing world. The US hoped for a new spirit of partnership and cooperation and offered to play a leading role in addressing the climate change challenge. In reference to mercury, he said there was a solid basis for developing a legally binding process. Palestine drew attention to the role of occupation and human rights violations in exacerbating environmental degradation.

MINISTERIAL CONSULTATIONS

From Monday to Thursday, under the chairmanship of GC-25/GMEF President Dulić, ministers and heads of delegation held a panel and two roundtable discussions to discuss the themes of "Global crises: national chaos?" and "International environmental governance: help or hindrance?" On Friday they took note of the GC-25/GMEF President's Summary of the ministerial consultations.

On Monday, the consultations addressed both themes, focusing on the nature and scale of current environment and development challenges and opportunities.

Gerda Verburg, Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, the Netherlands, and Chair of the Commission on Sustainable Development's 17th session, discussed the green revolution for sustainable agriculture in the context of environmental constraints. She proposed: investing more in sustainable agriculture; creating an enabling environment by fostering entrepreneurship, addressing land tenure, health and education; providing a sustainable production chain; improving market access, especially for developing countries; and providing food aid and a social safety net by empowering farmers with infrastructure and finance and risk protection against unreliable weather.

Freddy Numbery, Minister for Marine and Fisheries, Indonesia, highlighted the upcoming World Ocean Conference, aimed at developing an integrated and comprehensive picture of threats to oceans and addressing the impact of climate change.

Tadanori Inomata, Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) presented the Joint Management Review of environmental governance within the United Nations System (UNEP/GC.25/INF/33), highlighting the high cost of institutional fragmentation. He enumerated the JIU's key recommendations as, *inter alia*, the need for: a clear understanding of the division of labor between

UNEP and the multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs); a strategic system-wide policy orientation for environmental protection and sustainable development led by the UN General Assembly; integration of programme support funds for MEAs; and enhancing the coordination of capacity-building activities. Supporting the JIU report, Tanzania noted difficulties for developing countries to participate effectively in international programmes with more than 500 MEAs in existence. Uganda called on UNEP to scale up successful experiences in the synergistic application of MEAs.

Algeria called for the implementation of a triennial plan for Africa and, supported by Kenya, for pilot green economy projects. Brazil highlighted the success of its national ethanol programme. However, as Bangladesh cautioned, a focus on biodiesel could divert attention from the urgent need to scale up food production. A representative of the Workers and Trade Unions major group said the new green deal should correct market imperfections and focus on jobs with social benefits.

GLOBAL CRISES, NATIONAL CHAOS: A panel discussion titled “Towards a green economy” took place on Tuesday morning followed by three parallel roundtable sessions in the afternoon on the same subject. On Wednesday morning the panel discussion was dedicated to coping with multiple challenges and capturing opportunities.

Towards a Green Economy: Delivering the keynote presentation, Pavan Sukdev, Green Economy Initiative, highlighted a green economy as a “new engine for growth” comprising renewable energy, building retrofits, sustainable transport and agriculture and ecological infrastructure. He underscored the need to protect the vulnerable and on policy, he emphasized: rethinking subsidies; rewarding unrecognized benefits; penalizing uncaptured costs; and sharing the benefits of conservation.

In the intervening panel discussion, Sigmar Gabriel, Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, Germany, urged environment ministers to take the lead in the green economy, noting that they are also the “ministers of sustainable economic success.” He said that a stable political framework and a skilled workforce are essential preconditions for this. Jacqueline Cramer, Minister for Environment and Space, the Netherlands, underscored urgent action and requested UNEP to draw up a “green economy action list” to guide decision-makers. UNEP Executive Director Steiner confirmed this would be finalized in time for the G-20 Summit.

Byung Wook Lee, Vice-Minister for Environment, Republic of Korea, reported on measures taken under the new low-carbon economic growth strategy, which includes investing US\$38 billion in the environmental sector. Observing that “if we all take risks together, there is no risk,” Hasan Mahmud, State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Bangladesh, urged support for developing countries in their transition to a green economy. Stanislav Ananiev, Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, Russian Federation, stressed that international discussions should consider differing country circumstances to develop a shared vision for sustainable development.

Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker, International Panel for Sustainable Resource Management, urged governments to be more proactive in creating incentives to reduce carbon emissions and investment in renewable and efficient energy and production.

David Foster, Blue-Green Alliance, called for investments in smart, sustainable solutions, such as creating jobs in the green sector.

Uganda pointed to the difficulty of addressing the urban transport sector in a deregulated economy, and accessing the Clean Development Mechanism funds to support such efforts. Cramer responded by stressing the need to mobilize additional support for developing countries, while Mahmud emphasized investments in urban rail infrastructure. On mobilizing support, Gabriel reiterated the need for an enabling environment, and discussed the role of international environmental standards and increasing interaction with the World Trade Organization (WTO). Brazil, however, called for the removal of trade distorting subsidies and opposed international environmental standards that could harm exports. Malaysia said better market access for poor countries influences their ability to invest in sustainable development. Emphasizing the private sector’s role on the issue of finance, Sukdev also underscored eliminating perverse subsidies on the pricing and production of fossil fuels.

The Children and Youth major group urged governments to “act now” and consider meaningful and concrete measures to implement a global green economy. The International Federation of Agricultural Producers urged support for sustainable production to enhance rural livelihoods.

Coping with Multiple Challenges and Capturing Opportunities: Robert Watson, University of East Anglia, UK, highlighted key linkages between climate change and other environmental issues. On the global context of food security, he pointed to trade-distorting policies, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development subsidies and land policy conflicts. He outlined the multifunctionality of agriculture, suggested hunger can be addressed with appropriate use of existing tools, and emphasized the need to eliminate perverse subsidies and internalize externalities. Watson underscored cost-effective and equitable solutions to address issues such as climate change and biodiversity loss, stressing political will and moral leadership.

Khaled Zand Irani, Minister of Environment, Jordan, emphasized investment at the ecosystem level to keep the resource base functional, and said the benefits of technologies such as biofuels and genetically modified organisms are debatable. Irani also highlighted his country’s efforts as part of the environmental reform process and its paradigm shift in terms of energy policy planning.

Ligia Castro de Doens, Minister of Environment, Panama, discussed the challenge of setting strategic objectives for a new model of environmental management that reduces poverty, improves income distribution, maintains economic growth, and strengthens democracy and citizen participation.

During the panel discussion, Batilda Burian, Minister of State for Environment, Tanzania, outlined her country’s key environmental challenges, noting the preparation of National Adaptation Programmes of Action and mobilization of resources at the national level. Erik Solheim, Minister of Environment and Development Cooperation, Norway, emphasized that the carbon market is the most effective means of generating financial resources, and the need for broader thinking on payments for ecosystem services.

Hilary Benn, Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, UK, discussed the “crisis of sustainability,” explaining the credit crunch is a product of unsustainable lending and that climate change is caused by unsustainable emissions of carbon dioxide. He emphasized the need to invest in low carbon agriculture, proper storage and transport.

Jean-Louis Borloo, Minister of Ecology, Energy Sustainable Development and Land Planning, France, highlighted the EU’s climate package consisting of a commitment to a 20% cut in emissions of greenhouse gases by 2020, compared with 1990 levels; a 20% increase in the share of renewables in the energy mix; and a 20% cut in energy consumption. Jos Delbeke, Deputy Director-General, EC, highlighted the EU emissions trading scheme and the harmonization of policies on products such as clean cars and fuels.

Yvo de Boer, Executive Secretary, UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), acknowledged positive signs evident in financial crisis recovery packages, which include consideration of climate, energy and sustainability. He urged delegates to use the nine months in the lead up to the climate change talks in Copenhagen to “unlock the financial puzzle” so that the remaining pieces can fall into place.

During the ensuing discussion, delegates highlighted: national circumstances; food security; water and energy in the context of climate change; the role of technology, the private sector, and capacity development; mobilizing financial resources under the climate change regime; and financing as the key to addressing the ongoing challenges.

IEG REFORM HELP OR HINDRANCE: A panel discussion on IEG from a country perspective took place on Thursday morning. Delegates also convened in three parallel roundtables on the same issue in the afternoon.

In his keynote address, Marthinus Van Schalkwyk, Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, South Africa, expressed frustration with the “lack of fundamental reform or even incremental progress” on IEG and emphasized that maintaining the present IEG status quo was untenable. He said questions relating to form and structure must follow function to avoid an inward-looking dialogue and weaker UNEP mandate. Van Schalkwyk emphasized the need to set clear milestones over the next three years, and for a political declaration to come out of the next GC special session to guide further work in the run-up to Rio+20.

During the panel discussion, Andreas Carlgren, Minister for the Environment, Sweden, pointed to the lack of trust between developing and developed countries regarding delivering on commitments. He called for a new flexible governance mechanism and enhanced coordination of the UN system.

Faumuina Liuga, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, Samoa, said the challenge for the GC/GMEF is to promote environmental sustainability as a basis for economic recovery and financial growth. He called for UNEP regional offices to be upgraded and for more authority to be delegated to them.

John Michuki, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Kenya, observed that IEG should ensure full consideration of developing country needs and challenges and should not place unrealistic demands on governments and the

UN system. He called on developed countries to honor official development assistance commitments and to provide new and additional financial resources.

Roberto Dobles Mora, Minister of Environment, Energy and Telecommunications, Costa Rica, acknowledged agreement to strengthen UNEP but divergence on the degree of transformation and specific actions to be taken.

Ana Maria Sampaio Fernandes, Brazil, called for a solution that helps countries to implement sustainable development and action that integrates environmental, social and economic pillars.

Kevin Conrad, Coalition for Rainforest Nations, emphasized that it is “time to reframe environmental theory before talking about governance” and to “consider environmental incentives before restrictions.” He underscored that the environment cannot be protected until it is correctly valued.

In the ensuing discussion, many delegates drew attention to the lack of coherence in environmental governance. They pointed to the need to strengthen UNEP in order to improve implementation and for enhanced coordination and synergistic approaches at the institutional level.

PRESIDENT’S SUMMARY: GC-25/GMEF President Dulić presented a 41-page draft summary of the ministerial discussions during closing plenary. Delegates took note of the summary.

On the transition towards a green economy, ministers highlight the key challenge as balancing between environmental protection, and poverty reduction and economic growth. Recognizing that they must become “ministers for sustained economic success as well,” ministers identify the need to:

- improve the global and national environmental architecture to provide coherent and timely responses to multiple environmental, social and economic challenges;
- integrate the green economy into existing sustainable development process, including the need to create green jobs, and involve all stakeholders in this transition;
- facilitate the transfer of affordable green technologies and building human and institutional capacity to take advantage of existing technological solutions and financial support;
- ensure that environmental standards and other green economy measures do not create trade distortions or impede market access;
- streamline financial mechanisms without imposing unnecessary requirements on developing countries and or countries with economies in transition; and
- raise sufficient public awareness to drive political change.

On opportunities, the key message is that the green economy is the way out of the ongoing economic, climate, energy, water and food crises, by enabling fundamental restructuring of economies that encourage and sustain green energy, green growth, and green jobs. This includes:

- regulating markets to promote the transition to a green economy;
- strengthening or transforming the international environmental architecture to respond to multiple challenges and opportunities;
- improving existing economic stimulus packages to promote global cooperation for technological innovation and technology transfer;
- investing in ecological infrastructure and clean energies; and

- launching South-South exchanges on successful green programmes and projects.
- On IEG, ministers note that the proposed Rio+20 Summit provides an opportunity to put a full package on IEG reform on the table for finalization by 2012. They identify a number of issues that need to be dealt with before reform can be achieved. These include, *inter alia*:
 - how to use the next three years to define a new paradigm of collective action;
 - whether to undertake reform within the current system or launch a process towards a stronger IEG regime;
 - putting in place incentives to ensure coordination of financial resource flows;
 - ensuring that IEG reform is responsive to needs at the national level and contributes to and strengthens national environmental governance;
 - noting the lack of trust between developed and developing countries and countries with economies in transition is an impediment to IEG; and
 - strengthening the role of UNEP, including the normative versus operational balance and the role of the UNEP GC versus that of the UNGA in the IEG debate itself.

The Summary concludes that the time has come to explore more ambitious steps in thinking about IEG. It stresses the importance of bringing high-level political guidance back to into IEG discussion and setting clear milestones over the next three years. It also places emphasis on the need to make a fresh start in the discourse and inspire a new generation of thinkers to achieve sustainable development and an IEG system to deliver on it.

With regard to the UN system and the role of the GMEF, ministers underscored the need for the

- implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan, strengthening UNEP, as well as its regional presence; and
- strengthening the role of the GMEF and building on its high participation by ministers to influence the UN General Assembly on environmental issues

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

The COW convened from Monday to Friday to consider agenda items on: state of the environment; IEG; UNEP's contribution as an implementing agency of the Global Environment Facility; follow-up to and implementation of the outcomes of the UN summits and major intergovernmental meetings, including the decisions of the GC; budget and programme of work for the biennium 2010-2011; provisional agenda, date and venue of future GC/GMEF sessions; and other matters. The COW also considered draft decisions prepared by the Committee of Permanent Representatives, contained in documents UNEP/GC.25/L.2 and Add.1, 2 and 3), as well as draft decisions proposed during the session. The COW approved 17 decisions, which were forwarded to the plenary for adoption.

COORDINATION AND COOPERATION WITH THE UN SYSTEM: This agenda item (UNEP/GC.25/INF/8, UNEP/GC.25/INF/10 and 33) was addressed in the COW on Wednesday. Delegates took note of a report from the Secretariat on UNEP's role in the "One UN" Initiative, including its leadership on water, energy and climate change activities.

CONTRIBUTION OF UNEP AS AN IMPLEMENTING AGENCY OF THE GEF: The COW considered this item (UNEP/GC.25/12) on Wednesday. The UNEP Secretariat gave

an overview of the status of the Environment Fund, noting that more than 400 UNEP-implemented projects have been approved since the first Global Environment Facility (GEF) replenishment. The Secretariat also noted that UNEP's share of GEF funding had fallen by 7% during the fourth replenishment. The US, while expressing support for UNEP's activities, emphasized the need for further GEF reform, including establishment of an independent monitoring entity, in order to restore donor confidence. No decision was taken on this item.

FOLLOW-UP TO AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OUTCOMES OF UN SUMMITS: This item (UNEP/GC.25/15 and UNEP/GC.25/INF/3, 30 and 32) was introduced to the COW on Wednesday afternoon. It consisted of: Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES); issues arising from the resolutions of the UNGA at its 63rd session that are of specific relevance to the work of UNEP; follow up on United Nations summits and intergovernmental meetings; and the report of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR). The COW took note of the information provided.

RECOGNITION OF THE EARTH CHARTER: On Tuesday, Costa Rica introduced its draft decision (UNEP/GC.25/L.2/Add.2) on recognizing the Earth Charter as an important ethical framework for promoting and implementing sustainable development. After informal consultations, Costa Rica withdrew the proposed draft decision to avoid overlaps with the Bali Strategic Plan.

SIDS: On Wednesday, delegates considered the report on small island developing states (SIDS) (UNEP/GC.25/6). Following a general discussion, including on the importance of the Barbados Programme of Action, the Mauritius Strategy, the need for capacity building and concern over the impact of the financial crisis, the COW took note of the report.

WATER POLICY AND STRATEGY: This agenda item (UNEP/GC.25/9 and UNEP/GC.25/INF/31) was briefly tabled during the COW on Wednesday as part of the omnibus decision on reports by the Executive Director (UNEP/GC.25/L.1). The EU noted that water is one of its priority areas and stressed the need for immediate implementation of integrated water resource management, as adopted in the JPOI. The Russian Federation expressed support for UNEP's activities in the area of ground water, river basins and sustainable water ecosystems, and offered to contribute to developing global indicators for water quality. Delegates took note of the report.

GC-25/GMEF DECISIONS

Draft GC-25/GMEF decisions, submitted by the CPR and directly by governments at the GC-25/GMEF, were considered from Monday to Friday in the COW, the drafting group, and several contact groups. Unless otherwise mentioned, all decisions were adopted in plenary on Friday.

STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT: World environment situation: Deliberations on this issue (UNEP/GC.25/L.1) took place throughout the week in the drafting group. Among proposals discussed was the creation of an intergovernmental advisory group to work with stakeholders in conducting a global environmental assessment of environmental change. Questions were raised, however, about the group's composition, mandate, value and purpose. Some delegates argued that convening an intergovernmental meeting would duplicate the tasks of

the already-operational second intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder consultative forum. The group considered additional text proposed by the EU relating to future global assessment of environmental change. Concern was raised about the cost of integrated and thematic UNEP assessments, and whether such assessments would be covered under the programme of work and budget. Agreement was reached, however, on strengthening the policy relevance of the next Global Environment Outlook (GEO-5). The draft decision was discussed and approved in the COW on Thursday.

Final Decision: The final decision (UNEP/GC.25/L.5/Add.2) calls upon governments to improve the scientific basis of their own environmental management and to demonstrate strong leadership individually and collectively to implement effective policy responses. It further invites governments, intergovernmental organizations and other stakeholders to contribute financially to enable the completion of the “assessment of assessments” and its submission to the UNGA at its 64th session in 2009.

The GC specifically requests UNEP to undertake the following actions in support of governments and other stakeholders:

- make scientific data, metadata, and standards from assessments available in an open-access electronic format to provide a baseline for modeling and predictive analysis;
- maintain oversight of, and work with other partners to, streamline and improve coherence in international environment assessment, legislation and reporting processes;
- include, as a priority, capacity building for developing countries as a component of the assessment processes;
- undertake a coherent set of integrated and thematic assessments through the UNEP programme of work and budget, including the GEO-5;
- strengthen policy relevance of the GEO-5 by including an analysis of appropriate policy actions and their indicative costs and benefits to speed up realization of the internationally-agreed goals and targets;
- organize a GEO-5 process in which the scope, objectives and process of the GEO are finalized and adopted at a global intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder consultation and to convene a final intergovernmental meeting to negotiate and endorse the report; and
- elaborate on the requirements for a migration to targeted assessments on thematic priority areas.

Chemicals management including mercury: This agenda item (UNEP/GC.25/5, Add.1 and 2, and UNEP/GC.25/L.1), including the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM), lead and cadmium, and mercury, was discussed in the COW on Monday, after which it was referred to a contact group. The contact group on chemicals management negotiated the draft decision from Tuesday to Thursday, working through the night on Wednesday night in a Friends of the Chair Group and agreeing to the draft decision on Thursday afternoon. The COW approved the draft decision (UNEP/GC.25/CW/L.4) without amendment on Thursday evening.

Debate on chemicals management was dominated by the section on mercury and reaching agreement on further international action consisting of the elaboration of a legally binding instrument on mercury, and forming an

intergovernmental negotiating committee (INC). China, supported by India, preferred to defer any decision on establishing an INC to GC-27/GMEF, but both eventually agreed to establish an INC, with the first INC to convene in 2010, as opposed to 2009, as preferred by the EU, US, the African Group and others.

Another contentious issue included whether the INC should address intentional or unintentional mercury emissions. India preferred to limit the work to intentional emissions, thereby avoiding the need to address emissions from coal combustion. Switzerland, however, argued that these emissions were intentional because the consequence of mercury release from coal combustion was well established. Delegates eventually agreed on anthropogenic emissions.

The concept of leaving the door “faintly open” or “closed” to future substances was also subject to extensive debate. The EU favored an open door, to help prevent the unnecessary proliferation of instruments, however the US, Japan and others preferred the door to be closed. Eventually a compromise was achieved by recognizing that the mandate of the INC may be supplemented by future decisions of the GC.

Regarding lead and cadmium, a reference to the 2006 Budapest Statement on Mercury, Lead and Cadmium was removed.

On SAICM, the issue of inviting the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM) to explore financing options was controversial. The US and Japan preferred to negotiate SAICM-related issues at ICCM-2, but Norway and the African Group stressed the need to identify innovative ways of funding.

Final Decision: The final omnibus decision (UNEP/GC.25/CW/L.4) on chemicals management includes sections on SAICM, lead and cadmium and mercury.

The preamble acknowledges, *inter alia*, the progress made to enhance the coordination and cooperation within the international chemicals and waste cluster and the widespread concerns over the serious adverse effects of mercury on human health and the environment and the urgent need for international action.

On SAICM, the GC, *inter alia*:

- requests the Executive Director to strengthen support for implementation of the Strategic Approach, in particular by ensuring that projects and programmes discussed under the Quick Start Programme (QSP) are processed and implemented in an expeditious manner;
- notes that the ICCM will discuss ways to further progress in implementation of SAICM as well as approaches for the mid- to long-term financing of the Strategic Approach; and
- urges governments, intergovernmental organizations, NGOs and others in a position to do so to contribute financially and in kind to the implementation of the Strategic Approach, including through the QSP, the Secretariat and the programme of work of UNEP.

On lead and cadmium, the GC, *inter alia*:

- notes that further action is needed to address the challenges posed by lead and cadmium;
- encourages efforts by governments and others to reduce the risks to human health and the environment throughout the whole life cycle of those substances, and to take action to promote the use of lead- and cadmium-free alternatives;

- requests the Executive Director, in cooperation with governments and relevant institutions, to continue to address the data and information gaps identified in the UNEP reviews of scientific information on lead and cadmium; and
- requests the Executive Director to finalize the scientific review, taking into account the latest available information in line with decisions GC 24/3 and 23/9, and to report to GC-26 to inform discussions on the need for global action related to lead and cadmium.

On mercury, the GC, *inter alia*:

- notes with appreciation the final report of the OEWG on mercury;
- acknowledges the need to manage mercury in an efficient, effective and coherent manner, taking into account GC decisions on IEG and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities;
- agrees to further international action consisting the elaboration of a legally binding instrument on mercury, which could include both binding and voluntary approaches, together with interim activities, to reduce risks to human health and the environment;
- requests the Executive Director to convene an INC with the mandate to prepare a global legally binding instrument on mercury, commencing its work in 2010 with the goal of completing its work by GC-27 in 2013;
- agrees that the INC, taking into account, *inter alia*, the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, is to develop a comprehensive and suitable approach to mercury, including provisions to: specify the objectives of the instrument; reduce the supply of mercury and enhance its capacity for environmentally sound storage; reduce demand in products and processes, international trade and atmospheric emissions; address mercury-containing waste; to specify arrangements for capacity building; and address compliance;
- agrees that the INC should consider the following: flexibility; approaches tailored to specific sectors; technical and economic availability of mercury-free alternatives; achieving cooperation and coordination to avoid unnecessary duplication of proposed actions with provisions in other agreements; prioritization for action; possible co-benefits; and risks to human health;
- recognizes that the mandate of the INC may be supplemented by further decisions of the GC;
- requests the Executive Director to hold one OEWG meeting in the second half of 2009, to prepare for the work of the INC; and
- requests the Executive Director to, as a priority action, provide the necessary support to the INC, the UNEP mercury programme and the Global Mercury Partnership as near-term activities to address mercury.

Waste management: The relevant documents (UNEP/GC.25/L.1 and UNEP/GC.25/INF/29) were briefly introduced on Wednesday in the COW as part of the omnibus decision. Delegates agreed that the section on waste management would be treated as a separate decision, and this issue was discussed in an informal working group on Wednesday. A revised decision was considered and adopted by the COW on Thursday.

Final Decision: In the decision (UNEP/GC.25/CW/L.3), the GC, *inter alia*:

- requests the Executive Director to provide further assistance to developing countries in their efforts to strengthen national implementation of an integrated waste approach and to support capacity building and technology support in the field of waste management; and
- requests the Executive Director to present a report on progress and implementation of the present decision to the GC at GC-26.

Support to Africa: This agenda item (UNEP/GC.25/L.2/Add.3) was introduced by the African Group in the COW on Monday and considered in an informal group chaired by Agnes Kalibbala (Uganda) on Wednesday and Thursday. It was approved by the COW on Thursday. The main issues surrounded language on UNEP's role regarding regional environmental agreements, support to regional and subregional bodies and to the envisioned regional climate policy centre, as well as follow-up regarding the publication of *Africa: Atlas of our Changing Environment*.

Final Decision: In the decision (UNEP/GC.25/CW/L.2/Add.1), the GC requests the Executive Director, within the context of the approved programme of work and budget for the biennium 2010-2011 and the MTS for the period 2010-2013, to:

- continue extending implementation and institutional support to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), including the subregional environmental action plans;
- effectively strengthen the Africa Environmental Outlook process as a tool for monitoring environmental challenges and sustainable development in Africa as a framework for environmental reporting at national and subregional levels;
- support the implementation of the MTS through the programme of work in a more coordinated and coherent manner for greater impact for Africa and to continue seeking extrabudgetary funding;
- work closely with the African Union (AU), the regional economic communities, the NEPAD secretariat and other partners to enhance the strategic role of UNEP within the framework of the "Delivering as One" approach;
- work with the UN Economic Commission for Africa to provide the requisite technical support to the African Climate Policy Centre, once established, to promote the mainstreaming of climate change into social and economic development and planning processes;
- strengthen working relationships with the AU's specialized technical committees, to facilitate the mainstreaming of the environment into the AU's work;
- continue supporting the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment and the African Ministers' Council on Water in the implementation of their work programmes;
- continue mobilizing financial resources to build the capacity of African countries in integrated and harmonized assessment and reporting;
- continue supporting the use of, and to update as appropriate, the publication, *Africa: Atlas of our Changing Environment*, and the underlying data, as a tool for policy decision-making, and to assist countries in developing capacities to produce their own national atlases; and

• report to GC-26, as part of the reporting on the programme of work and budgets, on the implementation of this decision.

South-South cooperation: This issue was introduced in the COW on Monday as part of the omnibus decision (UNEP/CG.25/L.1). Delegates considered a separate draft decision on this issue (UNEP/GC.25/L.2/Add.1) and were not able to agree on the operative paragraphs concerning resource mobilization; therefore Chair Uosukainen invited the G-77/China, the EU, the US and others to form an informal drafting group. The G-77/China and the EU were subsequently able to agree on compromise language referring to “necessary adequate resources” and the decision was approved by the COW on Thursday.

Final Decision: In the decision (UNEP/GC/24/CW/L.3/Add.1), the GC urges the UNEP Executive Director to strengthen the UNEP coordination mechanism and structure for South-South cooperation, including its regional presence; invites governments and relevant organizations to provide the necessary adequate resources for the work of UNEP in South-South cooperation; and encourages the Executive Director to develop further and implement high-profile demonstrable projects. The GC also requests the UNEP Executive Director to report on progress to GC-26/GMEF.

Environmental law: This agenda item (UNEP/GC.25/11, Add.1,2, and 3 and UNEP/GC.25/L.1) was discussed briefly in the COW on Tuesday. In an initial exchange of views, delegates generally welcomed the Fourth Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law, but China said the programme should be more focused on capacity building. The EU noted that guidelines on access to information and liability would assist developing countries.

The draft decision was considered by the drafting group on Wednesday and Thursday. The COW approved the draft decision on Thursday evening, after deleting reference to the EU law on environmental liability.

Final Decision: The decision (UNEP/GC.25/CW/L.3) is made up of three sections: the Fourth Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law; draft guidelines for the development of national information, public participation and access to justice in environmental matters; and draft guidelines for the development of national legislation on liability, response action and compensation from damage caused by activities to the environment.

The GC, *inter alia*, adopts the Fourth Programme for Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law as a broad strategy for the international law community and UNEP in formulating the activities in the field of environmental law for the decade commencing in 2010. The GC/GMEF also requests the Executive Director to implement the Programme, taking into account the MTS and to undertake a mid-term review of the implementation and effectiveness of the Programme no later than GC-28 in 2015 and report to GC-30 in 2019.

The GC, *inter alia*:

- takes note of the draft guidelines for the development of national legislation on access to information, public participation and access to justice in environmental matters;
- requests the Secretariat to carry out further work on the guidelines with a view to the adoption by the GC/GMEF at its next special session;

- takes note of the draft guidelines for the development of national legislation on liability, response action and compensation of damage caused by activities dangerous to the environment; and
- requests the Secretariat to carry out further work on the guidelines with a view to adoption by the GC/GMEF at its next special session.

Intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity: This agenda item (UNEP/GC.25/L.1 and UNEP/GC.25/L.5) was discussed in the COW and in the drafting group from Monday to Thursday. A draft decision was approved by the COW on Thursday.

Angela Cropper, UNEP Deputy Director, highlighted the intergovernmental science-policy platform for biodiversity and ecosystem services (IPBES), saying it was a key area where progress could be made. Delegates expressed general support for convening a second meeting, which the Republic of Korea said it was considering hosting in June 2009. The US, Canada and Brazil called for further consideration of the gap analysis. Senegal said a platform should be established as soon as possible. China, however, favored improving existing mechanisms and structures, while Brazil and Colombia said a new panel should only be established under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). China and Japan saw merit in constituting a panel outside the CBD, but would not rule out any options. The EU said the draft decision did not accurately reflect the Putrajaya recommendations and proposed amendments. The draft decision was then forwarded to the drafting group for further consideration where progress was made on a general timeline for the improvement of the interface.

Final Decision: The decision (UNEP/GC.25/CW/L.3) recognizes the need to strengthen and improve IPBES, and takes note of the preliminary report of the gap analysis carried out by UNEP. On the improvement of IPBES, the GC invites governments and relevant organizations to continue to explore mechanisms to improve IPBES and further requests the Executive Director to convene a second intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder meeting in 2009.

INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE: This agenda item, addressing the implementation of decision SS.V11/10 (UNEP/GC/25/3; UNEP/GC/25/INF/14; /INF/16 and Add.1, /INF/20 and /INF/33) was taken up by the COW on Tuesday, where it was referred to the drafting group. The draft decision (UNEP/GC/25/L.1) was reviewed by the drafting group on Wednesday and Thursday. The COW approved the final draft (UNEP/GC/25/CW/L.3/Add.1) without amendment on Friday.

The discussion of this item covered a wide range of UNEP activities and issues pertaining to its operation, including: follow-up to paragraph 169 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome; strengthening UNEP’s scientific base; Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building; financing; MEAs; and coordination in the UN system, including the Environment Management Group (EMG).

The JIU presented its report “Management Review of the Environmental Governance of the United Nations System” (UNEP/GC.25/INF/33) in the COW on Tuesday. Delegates also heard a secretariat presentation on the EMG.

Indonesia and several other delegations called for UNEP to be strengthened, with a focus on capacity building and implementing the Bali Strategic Plan. Canada emphasized the importance of universal membership of the GC and the mainstreaming of the Bali Strategic Plan. Uruguay stressed the importance of the “One UN” Initiative in addressing fragmentation on environment issues at the national and international levels. There was discussion of the way the institutional future of the IEG should be taken up, with Brazil proposing the UNGA as the proper locus for decisions. The US suggested it was premature to take a decision on the JIU report, and that IEG should focus on implementation, a responsibility that lies with national governments. He said he looked forward to a discussion on a global environmental architecture.

Colombia said the possibility of a new IEG architecture should not be discarded, and the EU noted increasing institutional fragmentation, and urged full implementation of the Cartagena package. Several delegates proposed language to contextualize the follow-up to paragraph 169 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome on UN system-wide coherence. However, others felt that opening discussion on this would duplicate the ongoing parallel consultation in a small informal group, and the issue was not debated at length.

Final Decision: The final decision (UNEP/GC.25/CW/L.3/Add.1) on the implementation of decision SS.VII/1 on IEG has six sections on: follow-up to paragraph 169 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome; strengthening the scientific base of UNEP; the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building; financing of UNEP; issues related to MEAs; and enhanced coordination across the UN system, including the Environmental Management Group (EMG).

On the follow-up to paragraph 169 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome, the GC notes that the 64th session of the UN General Assembly will consider the issue of universal membership of GC and reaffirms its commitment to discussion with a view to adopting a UNGA resolution towards greater coherence and efficacy of the IEG framework.

On strengthening the scientific base of UNEP, the GC:

- reaffirms early warning, assessment and monitoring of the state of the global environment as core functions of UNEP;
- underlines the importance of strengthening capacities to provide environmental information for policy-setting and decision-making; and
- takes note of the revised Environment Watch strategy as consistent with UNEP’s programme of work and the “Delivering as One” approach, and describes important functions of the Strategy.

On the Bali Strategic Plan, the GC notes that the Plan has become an integral part of the MTS and the programme of work, and calls on the Executive Director of UNEP to advance and fully implement it; and requests the Executive Director to continue strengthening UNEP regional offices to contribute to the Plan’s implementation.

On strengthening the financing of UNEP, the GC:

- emphasizes the need for stable, adequate and predictable financial resources for the Environment Fund;

- encourages governments, noting the direction through the MTS, to contribute to the Environment Fund in preference to earmarked trust funds, and to make voluntary contributions to the Environment Fund;
- requests the UNEP Executive Director to notify all UN member states of the voluntary indicative scale of contributions he intends to propose for 2010-2011.

On MEAs, the GC:

- takes note of UNEP’s activities to improve the effectiveness of, and coordination and synergies between MEAs, while taking into account the autonomous decision-making authority of the Conferences of the Parties;
- welcomes the outcomes of an *Ad Hoc* Joint Working Group of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, as contained in its recommendations, and their adoption by the first two conventions; and
- encourages parties to other MEAs, where common issues arise, to consider ways of enhancing cooperation and coordination.

On enhanced coordination across the UN system, including the EMG, the GC:

- welcomes efforts by the Executive Director as Chair of the EMG in promoting cooperation across the UN system, including commitment to moving the UN towards climate neutrality;
- welcomes the UNEP-IUCN “Tematea” project as a tool to support coherent implementation of MEAs; and
- welcomes consideration in the EMG of the implementation of the ten-year strategy of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification and support to the 2010 biodiversity target process.

HIGH-LEVEL CONSULTATIVE IEG DISCUSSIONS:

While the GC-25/GMEF discussed the formal agenda item on IEG (see previous section) discussions took place in an informal group addressing the possibility of ministerial engagement in a GC/GMEF consultative process on the adequacy and effectiveness of IEG. As background, the group had documents UNEP/GC.25/16, UNEP/GC.25/16/Add.1, and JIU/REP/2008/3. The starting point for the discussions was the 10 February 2009 report of the Co-Chairs of the informal UNGA consultations on the institutional framework for UN environment work, where they concluded that the GC-25/GMEF would present an important opportunity to take stock, find a political compromise and provide delegations in New York with pragmatic, creative and constructive proposals to allow improving the current system.

The informal working group debated the rationale and possible terms of reference of a “regionally balanced group of ministers” intended to carry the IEG process further. Two structural options were discussed, as well as the form of expert support from UNEP. The negotiators agreed in principle with the creation of such a group. However, differences emerged between the EU and the US on its composition, with the EU insisting on strictly ministerial representation, and the US suggesting ministers with the possibility of high-level representatives. After a compromise was reached on the basis of the second formula, the group reported to the COW on Thursday, and a short draft decision was presented. Several members of the G-77/China, however, objected to the lack of transparency in the preparation

of the decision, and questioned the authors' "haste" and the relation of the proposed new GC/GMEF process with the UNGA.

The COW referred the draft back to the informal consultations, where negotiations continued with the participation of several G-77/China delegations. Discussion focused on the proposed group's structure of work, number of meetings, the mode of UNEP Executive Director's involvement in its work, and facilitation of developing country participation. The informal consultations reached agreement after prolonged debate, and the COW adopted the decision on Friday.

Final Decision: The decision (UNEP/GC.25/CW/L.3/Add.1) takes note of: the recommendation of the Co-Chairs of the UNGA informal consultations on the institutional framework for UN environment work to produce proposals that allow improving the current system; the discussion papers prepared by the Executive Director for ministerial consultations; and the management review of environment governance by the JIU. It further notes that the proposed consultative process and conclusions to be reached at the GC-25/GMEF 11th special session in 2010 will provide input to the UNGA's follow-up to paragraph 169 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome.

The GC:

- decides to establish a regionally representative consultative group of ministers or high-level representatives, comprising two to four governments from each UN region, while remaining open to other interested governments;
- requests the group to conclude its work and present options for improving IEG to the GC-25/GMEF 11th special session, with a view to providing inputs to the UNGA;
- decides the group will have two Co-Chairs, from a developing country and a developed country, and requests the UNEP Executive Director to participate as advisor;
- urges the group to begin work as soon as possible, and to determine the structure of its work at its first meeting; and
- requests the Executive Director to seek extrabudgetary resources to facilitate participation of developing countries proposed by regional groups.

BUDGET AND PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE BIENNIUM 2010-2011: These issues (UNEP/GC.25/12 and Add.1, UNEP/GC.25/13, UNEP/GC.25/14 and Add.1, UNEP/GC.25/INF/5 and /INF/6) were discussed in the COW and a contact group chaired by Agnes Kalibbala (Uganda) from Monday to Thursday, together with draft decisions on the biennial budget and programme of work for the biennium 2010-2011; the management of trust funds and other earmarked contributions; and the supplementary budget. The COW approved the three draft decisions (UNEP/GC.25/CW/L.2) on Thursday.

During the contact group discussions, work on the main draft decision on the proposed biennial budget and programme of work moved quickly and a small drafting group consisting of Japan, the EU, the US, Norway and others worked out compromise text on passages relating to transparency, consultations and prioritization regarding the six sub-programmes.

During closing plenary, Mexico cautioned that while it supported UNEP getting a greater allocation of the UN regular budget, this did not imply that the UN regular budget itself should be increased.

Final Decision: In the decision (UNEP/GC.25/CW/L.2), the GC approves appropriations for the Environment Fund of US\$180 million for the 2010-2011 biennium divided among six thematic sub-programmes: climate change; disaster and conflicts; ecosystem management; environmental governance; harmful substances and hazardous waste; and resource efficiency. It authorizes the UNEP Executive Director to reallocate budget resources between sub-programmes up to 20%, but requires consultation with the CPR whenever the reallocation exceeds 10%. It also calls for a greater share of the UN regular budget for UNEP.

The GC further, *inter alia*, requests the Executive Director to:

- continue to shift emphasis from delivery of outputs to achievement of results as well as consultations with member states as he implements the programme of work and budgets to the biennium 2010-2011;
- ensure that earmarked contributions, apart from those for which UNEP merely acts as treasurer, are used to fund activities in line with UNEP's programme of work;
- report to the CPR and GC on a half-yearly basis on the progress made by each of the sub-programmes and on the execution of the budgets, including voluntary contributions and expenditures, and reallocations or adjustments of the appropriations;
- provide the CPR with a document containing additional information on internal prioritization at the expected accomplishment level within each sub-programme of the programme of work for the biennium 2010-2011 prior to its implementation, and to include such information in future programmes of work; and
- prepare, in consultation with the CPR, a prioritized, results-oriented and streamlined programme of work and budgets for the biennium 2012-2013, giving appropriate consideration to the current progress and respective future prioritization of each sub-programme and including to the extent possible, information that links divisional resources to sub-programmes.

MANAGEMENT OF TRUST FUNDS AND OTHER EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS: The draft decision on this item (UNEP/GC.25/L.1) was introduced in the COW on Monday and then moved into a contact group chaired by Agnes Kalibbala, where it was quickly agreed, as it was acknowledged that the CPR had already discussed it extensively. The COW approved the decision on Thursday.

Final Decision: The decision (UNEP/GC.25/CW/L.2) approves the establishment of four new technical cooperation trust funds since GC-24 and the extension of five general trust funds and seven technical cooperation trust funds, subject to receiving requests from governments or donors to do so, and closes one general trust fund. It also approves the establishment of one new special trust fund and extends 20 general trust funds and three technical cooperation trust funds for regional seas programmes, conventions, protocols and special funds.

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET: This item (UNEP/GC.25/L.1) was considered briefly together with the management of trust funds.

Final Decision: The decision (UNEP/GC.25/CW/L.2) approves the supplementary work programme for the biennium 2008-2009 and approves appropriations of US\$171 million for the Environment Fund, including:

- US\$147.2 million allocated among six programmes: environmental assessment and early warning; environmental law and conventions; policy implementation; technology, industry and economics; regional cooperation; communication and public information.
- US\$6.9 million for Fund programme reserve; and
- US\$16.9 million for the support budget.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL SITUATION IN THE GAZA STRIP: Algeria, on behalf of the Arab States, presented the draft decision (UNEP/GC.25/CW/L.3) on Thursday, which the COW subsequently approved.

Final Decision: The preamble recalls, *inter alia*, decision GCSS.VII/7 on the environmental situation in the occupied Palestinian territories and expresses its deep concern at the negative implications of environmental impacts on the Gaza Strip.

In the operative text, the GC requests UNEP to participate in the Cairo Conference on the Reconstruction of Gaza and to deploy a mission of environmental experts to Gaza to assess the natural and environmental impacts caused by the escalation of violence and hostilities. The GC calls upon the parties concerned to protect the environment and for member states and UN agencies to allocate adequate resources and provide technical, logistical and financial support and assistance to ensure the success of the UNEP mission of environmental experts to the Gaza Strip. It calls on the UNEP Executive Director to submit a follow-up report on the findings, results and recommendations to the GC/GMEF at its 11th Special Session in 2010.

OMNIBUS DECISION ON REPORTS BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: On Tuesday, the Secretariat introduced the omnibus draft decision (UNEP/GC.25/L.1), which suggests taking note of the Executive Director's reports on waste management, SIDS, support to Africa, South-South cooperation and water policy. It was agreed the reports on waste management and South-South cooperation would be considered as stand-alone decisions.

Final Decision: In the decision (UNEP/GC.25/CW/L.3), the GC, *inter alia*:

- takes note with appreciation the reports by the Executive Director summarizing the activities undertaken by UNEP as requested by GC-24 on: SIDS; support to Africa in environmental management and protection; and water policy and strategy of UNEP; and
- requests the Executive Director to continue to strengthen results-based management in UNEP and, wherever possible, provide an account of the relevant activities in a results-based report to the GC on the implementation of the programmes of work and budgets.

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF BIODIVERSITY: Japan introduced this agenda item (UNEP/GC.25/CW/CRP.5) in the COW on Thursday, inviting governments and relevant organizations to participate in activities to commemorate the International Year of Biodiversity in 2010 and calling on UNEP to coordinate such efforts. Brazil, the EU and others welcomed the opportunity to refocus attention on the CBD, further noting

that the decision should reflect agreed WSSD language on the adoption of an international regime on fair and equitable benefit-sharing by 2010. Chair Uosukainen invited interested delegations to submit additional proposals to the drafting group for discussion. After extensive debate on including reference to the CBD, which many delegations were unable to agree on, the group forwarded a compromise draft decision excluding reference to the CBD and it was approved by the COW on Friday. During discussion in the COW, Brazil explained that it had withdrawn the proposal "in a spirit of flexibility and with great reluctance," reiterating concern that reduction in biodiversity loss cannot be achieved without providing new and additional resources to developing countries.

Final Decision: In the decision (UNEP/GC.25/L.5/Add.2), the GC invites governments and relevant organizations to plan and undertake the appropriate activities to commemorate and celebrate the International Year of Biodiversity, requests the Executive Director of UNEP and the Executive Secretary of the CBD to provide active and full support to UNEP in preparations and organization of the tenth Conference of the Parties to the CBD as well as to promote cooperation between the coordination of international organizations and NGOs so as to maximize contributions to the biodiversity agenda.

INVOLVEMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES: This item was considered by the COW on Wednesday. UNEP Deputy Executive Director Angela Cropper presented the final review report of the long-term strategy on the engagement and involvement of young people in environmental issues (UNEP/GC.25/10) and discussed the second long-term strategy in which youth activities are more closely aligned with the six cross-cutting priorities of the MTS. Representatives of the Tunza Youth Advisory Council made statements on a number of issues being discussed in the GC/GMEF. Delegates agreed to endorse the second long-term strategy.

Final Decision: In the decision (UNEP/GC.25/CW/L.3), the GC, *inter alia*:

- endorses the activities contained in the second long-term strategy and to implement the long-term strategy, within available resources;
- requests the Executive Director to seek additional extrabudgetary resources to implement the strategy; and
- requests the Executive Director to present a mid-term progress report on the implementation of the strategy at the session of the GC/GMEF in 2013, and to present a final report in 2015.

PROVISIONAL AGENDAS AND DATES AND VENUES FOR GCSS-11/GMEF AND GC-26/GMEF: Delegates approved the draft decision in the COW on Friday. China requested the Bureau to ensure that dates do not clash with Chinese spring festival in 2010 and 2011 and would forward the relevant dates to the Bureau.

Final Decision: In the decision (UNEP/GC.25/CW/L.3), the GC/GMEF decides to hold GCSS-11 in 2010 at a location to be determined and GC-26/GMEF in Nairobi in 2011.

CLOSING PLENARY

In plenary on Friday, COW Rapporteur Juan Carlos Cué Vega (Mexico) presented the report of the COW (UNEP/GC.25/CW/L.1) highlighting the 17 decisions approved by the COW

and forwarded to plenary for adoption. Delegates adopted the draft report with minor amendments. The GC further approved the verbal report on credentials.

GC-25/GMEF President Olivier Dulić introduced the President's Summary of the Ministerial Consultations, which he emphasized was an unedited draft. He explained that the Summary took into consideration inputs from all the major regional groups, Friends of the President and others, and only sought to present the main points emanating from the panel discussions and roundtables rather than provide a consensus view. Dulić invited comments from the floor, saying that they would be noted in the report of the plenary session. Cuba said that the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities" was not well articulated in the Summary and required greater emphasis.

The Czech Republic, on behalf of the EU, called the GC-25/GMEF "an important milestone in the history of UNEP and of the international environmental community" and welcomed the "landmark" decision on mercury, as a significant step forward to broader sound management of chemicals. He also suggested that the decision to establish a Group of Ministers and/or high-level representatives might produce a breakthrough on IEG far beyond Nairobi.

Nigeria, on behalf of G-77/China, thanked the Government of Kenya for the hospitality accorded to delegates. Noting the cordial atmosphere that characterized the meeting, he applauded the progress made on IEG and mercury.

The US thanked the President for his leadership and noted the historical decision on mercury that will begin the process of negotiating a legally binding instrument.

The Holy See said that GC-25 gave hope that UNEP can increasingly be an instrument to facilitate the move toward the common good rather than just an accumulation of national interests, but cautioned that it is not enough to simply seek a green economy, but it must become a green human economy.

Nobel Laureate Wangari Maathai noted the optimism that the GC's results had instilled in all participants, but cautioned that "we should not flatter ourselves thinking that we can save the planet." She stressed the importance of the reducing emission from deforestation and forest degradation initiative and its role in addressing climate change. She also suggested getting the world's armies involved in combating "the hidden enemy" of environmental degradation, and urged the delegates to "go, be soldiers!"

Executive Director Steiner noted that when GC-25/GMEF convened he enunciated five indicators by which it could be judged successful, and he declared that all five had been met, in some cases exceeded. He attributed the success to months of hard work by UNEP staff, the leadership of the GC President, hard work and long hours spent by delegates negotiating many items concurrently and most of all, the spirit of trust that prevailed. "Trust must be," he declared, "the first and last thing for UNEP as the world looks to it and this forum to be the voice of the environment." He adjourned the session at 4:29 pm.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF GC-25/GMEF

The 25th session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC-25/GMEF) ended on a high note in Nairobi. The sense of satisfaction was apparent on the faces of weary delegates, as they trooped out of the UN complex in Nairobi on Friday afternoon. The consensus was plain: in comparison to some recent sessions, this one represented an outstanding accomplishment. An agreement to initiate negotiations toward a mercury convention and re-launching the process of improving international environmental governance (IEG) were some of the more vivid examples of a successful gathering. Whether it was the negotiating chemistry, the world economic downturn, or other factors that played a role, it was obvious that the GC-25/GMEF's accomplishments were due to a confluence of circumstances, not in the least the ability of Executive Director Achim Steiner to seize the mood and the moment.

This brief analysis examines some of the factors that contributed to the meeting's success, reviews the ground covered in Nairobi, and contemplates the new avenues that GC-25/GMEF has opened for UNEP, and which it might follow in the coming years.

THE CRISIS AND THE DOMINO EFFECT

"Nothing would be more tragic than to let a good crisis to go to waste!" These words of a GC delegate captured the widespread sentiment in the breezy hallways of Gigiri. Indeed, the GC-25/GMEF happened at an opportune moment. The backdrop was provided by two critical factors: the world economic and financial crisis, and the US election.

The first accentuated the imperative to rethink the bleak economic landscape in environmental terms. This was a unique opportunity for UNEP, as the United Nations environmental arm, to react to the immediate economic and social threats from an environmental perspective. The informal ministerial discussions in Nairobi turned into a soul searching quest for practical ways to place environment at the heart of difficult economic policy decisions. The intellectual quality and political weight of the debate were transformed into a strong message, on behalf of UNEP, in favor of a "green economy," with specific ideas on how to reach both the public and policy-makers, and convince the skeptics that it is possible to bridge the gap between 21st century innovations and financial and technological realities in the poor areas of the world. It is here that the UNEP played its catalytic role.

The second factor that galvanized the GC-25/GMEF was clearly the US election and the potential transformation of the world's largest economic player into an environmental champion. The signals that emanated from Washington on climate change and a host of other environment issues echoed in the conference rooms of Gigiri, and had a powerful effect on negotiations. Time and again, the US delegation was seen swiftly shedding layers of its "Mr. Nyet" image, opening up to new proposals, welcoming discussion of topics previously considered taboo, and going out of their way to being receptive, engaged and flexible. Interestingly, as a seasoned GC participant observed, the "Obama factor", i.e., the critical rethinking of fossilized positions, was producing a "domino effect". Some countries that traditionally enjoyed hiding behind the back of the American delegation,

letting them do “the unpleasant work,” could do this no longer, and were obliged to adjust positions to fit the prevailing mood of constructiveness.

MERCURY – THE BREAKTHROUGH

It was in negotiating chemicals management that the GC-25/GMEF saw its greatest success, in what was judged by governments as an historic breakthrough. To some old-time delegates, the dynamics of this latest round of negotiations seemed a lesson in creative diplomacy.

As delegates turned to the noxious issue of mercury, the expected lines of division (voluntary measures vs. a legally binding instrument) threatened to stall the process again. Traditionally, the negotiators were aligned in two camps. For years, the US, Argentina, China, India and Mexico, were pitted against a legally binding instrument, with Australia and Canada taking a more reserved position. The EU, the African Group, Switzerland, and most Latin American and Caribbean countries were strongly supportive of a convention.

It is true that most participants expected an American position change, but there was an air of wonder and exhilaration when the US delegation, in a dramatic about face, voiced its unreserved support for a legally binding instrument, thus opening the way to agreement.

Countries traditionally hiding behind the US were left with a stark choice: stand alone, or be swept along. Australia, Canada, Argentina and Mexico were quickly swept along, while China and India, with support from Indonesia and Pakistan, continued trying to convince others that a legally binding instrument was “unnecessary and untenable.” However, they went along, and participated in negotiating the draft decision.

After a strenuous night session, the Friends of the Chair, including the US, China, the EU, India, Serbia, Nigeria, Argentina, Japan and Norway, managed to strike a compromise: China and India would support a legally binding instrument, as long as the first INC convened in 2010, rather than in 2009. They agreed that an open-ended working group will convene in late 2009 to prepare for the INC.

Another compromise included the recognition that the INC mandate may be supplemented by retaining a “faintly open” door for the eventual inclusion of lead and cadmium, which the EU insisted upon, and which in the end, was palatable to the US.

The agreement on chemicals management was greeted with applause and celebratory back-slapping. The decision was momentous, because all negotiators were stretched to the limits of their briefs. Some warned that the devil may be in the details, and deliberations in the INC will be tortuous, since some countries are eager to run at lightning speed and others intend to proceed at a slow pace. However, the voices of hope rang loud in the corridors. Several delegates spoke (perhaps audaciously) of the mercury decision as a first step in the “new dawn” of environmental policy.

UNEP AND IEG – ANOTHER STEP

UNEP grapples with an impressive array of issues and for most of them the GC-25/GMEF proved to be a stimulus. It made solid headway in strengthening its unique role in scientifically credible and policy-relevant assessments of global environment change, thus helping bridge the gap between science and policy implementation. It ruled on taking steps towards establishing

an IPCC-like process for the science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services. This would be an important addition to scientific work on climate change.

There was one decision, however, that may have a sweeping effect on the way UNEP will operate in the future. This decision, admittedly a procedural one, and perhaps innocuous to a bystander, is fraught with far-reaching implications. The countries assembled in Nairobi took a bold step by instituting a small ministerial group to have another hard look at the possibilities to rationalize the whole wide plane of global environmental governance. The impassioned plea of the South African minister of environmental affairs for re-launching the IEG debate at a political level was poignant, and struck a chord in the hearts of many delegates. The somewhat sterile institutional debates of recent years about universal membership of the Governing Council, and transforming UNEP into a World Environmental Organization stalled because they focused on form, instead of clarifying function. For this reason, they often led to dead ends.

UNEP finds itself in a position it had not enjoyed in years. It has more financial contributions than anticipated and, consequently, more capacity to deliver. It is gaining donor trust with results-based management and greater transparency. Governments are more open to new ideas. In the family of UN institutions, UNEP has become a model of environmentally friendly and climate-neutral housekeeping.

There is another, no less important consideration. The decisions taken by the GC-25/GMEF have filled UNEP’s function with more robust substance. At the end of the day, it will be the far-reaching substantive achievements on critical environmental issues that will lay the ground for a transformation of UNEP into something entirely new and worthy of challenging times. This would require taking a closer look at the needs of developing countries, which are impacted to a greater extent than before by both the food and economic crises, and subsequently view the move to green technology as an ideal difficult to reach.

LOOKING AHEAD

As repeatedly noted by Achim Steiner, UNEP is an organization of the United Nations. Its activities run through the system and have the potential to affect it profoundly. UNEP is also impacted by trends both inside and outside the system. The latter are powerful and varied: the imperative need for fundamental UN reform, including expansion of the Security Council, the review of the Bretton Woods institutions, and the grand realignments occurring in the world of today, including the gradual demise of the G-8 and the rise of the G-20. It is in this novel scenario that UNEP will have to find its place.

A delegate noted that the tenth anniversary of UNEP’s Malmö Declaration, and of the IEG decision in Cartagena, are quickly approaching, and these are excellent occasions for taking stock. And beyond that that, in 2012 at Rio+20, a bold new generation of summitters may agree on global institutional changes corresponding to the burning need for genuine progress towards sustainable development. In this light, UNEP’s Global Ministerial Environment Forum has made a remarkable contribution for this prospect to materialize. It has come of age.

UPCOMING MEETINGS**ASIAN MERCURY STORAGE INCEPTION**

WORKSHOP: Taking place in Bangkok, Thailand, from 4-5 March 2009, the Asian mercury storage project inception workshop aims to reduce the eventual supply of mercury to the biosphere by initiating a regional process that will support the sequestration of excess mercury in the region. For more information, contact: UNEP Chemicals, tel: +41-22-917-8183; fax: +41-22-797-3460; e-mail: mercury@chemicals.unep.ch; internet: http://www.chem.unep.ch/mercury/storage/Inception_workshop.htm

INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONGRESS ON CLIMATE CHANGE: GLOBAL RISKS, CHALLENGES AND DECISIONS: Taking place from 10-12 March 2009 in Copenhagen, Denmark, this Congress is organized by the University of Copenhagen in cooperation with the partners in the International Alliance of Research Universities. The Congress aims to identify and synthesize existing and emerging scientific knowledge in order to make intelligent societal decisions on mitigation and adaptation strategies in response to climate change. For more information, contact: Torben Mandrup Timmermann; tel: +45-3-532-4106; e-mail: tmti@adm.ku.dk; internet: <http://climatecongress.ku.dk/>

CARIBBEAN WORKSHOP ON SAICM: This workshop on SAICM and related chemicals and hazardous waste instruments will take place in Bridgetown, Barbados, from 10-13 March 2009. For more information, contact the SAICM Secretariat; +41-22-917-8532; fax: +41-22-797-3460; e-mail: saicm@chemicals.unep.ch; internet: <http://www.saicm.org>

FIFTH WORLD WATER FORUM: Organized every three years by the World Water Council in collaboration with the authorities of the host country, the World Water Forum is the largest international event in the field of water. The fifth forum will take place from 15-22 March 2009 in Istanbul, Turkey, on the theme "Bridging Divides for Water." One of the special features of the Forum will be 100 topical multi-stakeholder sessions taking place throughout the week, each one attempting to provide an answer and clearer understanding on a crucial water-related question. For more information, contact: World Water Council Secretariat; tel: +33-4-91-99-41-00; fax: +33-4-91-99-41-01; e-mail: m.giard@worldwatercouncil.org; internet: <http://www.worldwatercouncil.org/index.php?id=6>

MERCURY PARTNERSHIP ADVISORY GROUP

MEETING: The first meeting of the Partnership Advisory Group will take place from 31 March - 2 April 2009 in Geneva, Switzerland. For more information, contact: Brenda Koekkoek, UNEP Mercury Programme; tel: +41-22-917-8183; fax: +41-22-797-3460; e-mail: mercury@chemicals.unep.ch; internet: <http://www.chem.unep.ch/mercury/>

SECOND MEETING OF THE CBD AHTEG ON

BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE: The second meeting of the *Ad Hoc* Technical Expert Group on Biodiversity and Climate Change is organized by the CBD Secretariat and will be held from 30 March - 3 April 2009 in Helsinki, Finland. For more information, contact: CBD Secretariat; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: secretariat@cbd.int; internet: <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=AHTEG-BDCC-02-02>

AWG-LCA 5 AND AWG-KP 7: The fifth meeting of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Long-Term Cooperative Action (AWG-LCA) and the seventh session of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP) are scheduled to take place from 30 March - 9 April 2009, in Bonn, Germany. For more information, contact: UNFCCC Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-1000; fax: +49-228-815-1999; e-mail: secretariat@unfccc.int; internet: http://unfccc.int/meetings/unfccc_calendar/items/2655.php?year=2009

UNESCO WORLD CONFERENCE ON EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT – MOVING INTO THE SECOND HALF OF THE UN DECADE: This meeting takes place from 31 March - 2 April 2009 in Bonn, Germany. It is co-organized by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, in cooperation with the German Commission for UNESCO. For more information, contact UNESCO; e-mail: ESDconference2009@unesco.org; internet: <http://www.esd-world-conference-2009.org/en/home.html>

G-20 SUMMIT IN RESPONSE TO THE GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISIS: Taking place on 2 April 2009 in London, UK, this meeting will continue to debate how to address the global financial crisis and its impacts on sustainable development. For more information, contact the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office Press Office; tel: +44-20-7008-3100; e-mail: g20UK@hm-treasury.gov.uk; internet: <http://www.londonsummit.gov.uk/en/>

SEVENTH MEETING OF THE AD HOC OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON ACCESS AND BENEFIT-SHARING (WG ABS 7): This meeting of the Convention on Biological Diversity will convene at UNESCO headquarters, Paris, France, from 2-8 April 2009. The Working Group will continue the elaboration and negotiation of the international regime on access and benefit-sharing. For more information, contact: the CBD Secretariat; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: secretariat@cbd.int; internet: <http://www.cbd.int/doc/?meeting=ABSWG-07>

EIGHTH SESSION OF THE UN FORUM ON FORESTS (UNFF-8): This meeting takes place from 20 April - 1 May 2009 at UN headquarters in New York. It aims to reach agreement on a decision on voluntary global financial mechanisms, a portfolio approach and a forest financing framework. For more information, contact the UNFF secretariat; tel: +1-212-963-3401; fax: +1-917-367-3186; e-mail: unff@un.org; internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/forests/session.html>

STOCKHOLM CONVENTION COP-4: The Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) takes place from 4-8 May 2009 in Geneva, Switzerland. For more information, contact the Stockholm Convention Secretariat; tel: +41-22-917-8729; fax: +41-22-917-8098; e-mail: ssc@pops.int; internet: <http://www.pops.int/>

SECOND SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CHEMICALS MANAGEMENT: The second session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM2) is scheduled to take place in Geneva, Switzerland, from 11-15 May 2009. ICCM2 will be the first opportunity to review progress in the implementation of SAICM since its adoption in 2006 and the first time the ICCM will

perform its official functions as a high-level international forum for multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral discussion and exchange of experience on chemicals management issues. For more information, contact the SAICM Secretariat: tel: +41 22-917-8532; fax: +41 22 797 3460; e-mail: saicm@chemicals.unep.ch; internet: <http://www.saicm.org>

SEVENTEENTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: CSD-17 will take place from 4 -15 May 2009 at UN headquarters in New York. This policy session will focus on agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa. For more information, contact: the Division for Sustainable Development; tel: +1-212-963-8102; fax: +1-212-963-4260; e-mail: dsd@un.org; internet: http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/csd/csd_csd17.shtml

WORLD OCEAN CONFERENCE: Scheduled for 11-15 May 2009 in Manado, Indonesia, this conference is organized by the Government of Indonesia, Global Forum on Oceans, Coasts and Islands, and other partners. For more information, contact: WOC-09 Secretariat; tel: +62-21-351-9070; fax: +62-21-386-0532; e-mail: info@woc2009.org; internet: <http://www.woc2009.org/>

30TH SESSIONS OF THE UNFCCC SUBSIDIARY BODIES, AWG-LCA 6, AND AWG-KP 8: The 30th sessions of the Subsidiary Bodies of the UNFCCC – the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) and the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) – will take place from 1-12 June 2009, in Bonn, Germany. At the same time, AWG-LCA 6 and AWG-KP 8 will also take place. For more information, contact: UNFCCC Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-1000; fax: +49-228-815-1999; e-mail: secretariat@unfccc.int; internet: http://unfccc.int/meetings/unfccc_calendar/items/2655.php?year=2009

SECOND WORLD CONGRESS ON AGROFORESTRY: Taking place from 23-28 August 2009 in Nairobi, Kenya, the overall congress theme is “Agroforestry – The Future of Global Land Use.” It will explore, among other themes: markets as opportunities and drivers of agroforestry land use; tree-based rehabilitation of degraded lands and watersheds; climate change adaptation and mitigation; agroforestry’s contribution to a multifunctional agriculture combining productivity with environmental sustainability; and policy options and institutional innovations for agroforestry land use. For more information, contact the CGIAR Secretariat; e-mail: wca2009@cgiar.org; internet: <http://www.worldagroforestry.org/wca2009/>

WORLD CLIMATE CONFERENCE 3: The Third World Climate Conference will take place from 31 August - 4 September 2009, in Geneva, Switzerland. The First and Second World Climate Conferences, held in 1979 and 1990, respectively, resulted in major movement on climate change issues. The third conference will take as its theme “Better climate information for a better future,” and will focus on how humankind can benefit from the advances in climate prediction and knowledge. It will also serve as input to COP 15. For more information, contact: Buruhani Nyenzi, WCC-3 Secretariat, WMO; tel: +41-22-730-8273; fax: +41-22-730-8042; e-mail: wcc-3@wmo.int; internet: http://www.wmo.int/pages/world_climate_conference

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON GREEN INDUSTRY IN ASIA: This meeting takes place from 9-11 September 2009 in Manila, the Philippines, on the theme, “Managing the Transition to Resource-Efficient and Low

Carbon Industries.” For more information, contact: A. Lacanlale, UNIDO; tel: +43-1-26026-3690; e-mail: A.Lacanlale@unido.org; internet: <http://www.unido.org/>

AWG-LCA 7 AND AWG-KP 9: The seventh meeting of the AWG-LCA and the ninth session of the AWG-KP are scheduled to take place from 28 September – 9 October 2009, in a location to be determined. For more information, contact: UNFCCC Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-1000; fax: +49-228-815-1999; e-mail: secretariat@unfccc.int; internet: http://unfccc.int/meetings/unfccc_calendar/items/2655.php?year=2009

THIRD MEETING OF THE AD HOC OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON MERCURY: This meeting will be held in late 2009 (dates and venue to be confirmed). For more information, contact: UNEP Chemicals Branch, Division of Technology, Industry and Economics; tel: +41-22-917-8183; fax: +41-22-797-3460; email: mercury@chemicals.unep.ch; internet: <http://www.chem.unep.ch/mercury>

UNFCCC COP 15 AND KYOTO PROTOCOL COP/MOP 5: The fifteenth Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC and fifth meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol are scheduled to take place from 7-18 December 2009, in Copenhagen, Denmark. These meetings will coincide with the 31st meetings of the UNFCCC’s subsidiary bodies. Under the “roadmap” agreed at the UN Climate Change Conference in Bali in December 2007, COP 15 and COP/MOP 5 are expected to finalize an agreement on a framework for combating climate change post-2012 (when the Kyoto Protocol’s first commitment period ends). For more information, contact: UNFCCC Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-1000; fax: +49-228-815-1999; e-mail: secretariat@unfccc.int; internet: <http://unfccc.int/>

GCSS-10/GMEF: The tenth Special Session of the UNEP Governing Council and the Global Ministerial Environment Forum will convene in early 2010. The dates and venue will be decided in consultation with the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UNEP. For more information, contact: Jamil Ahmad, Secretary of the UNEP Governing Council; tel: +254-20-7623431/7623411; fax: +254-20-623929/7623748; e-mail: sgc.sgb@unep.org; internet: <http://www.unep.org>

GLOSSARY

COW	Committee of the Whole
CPR	Committee of Permanent Representatives
CSD	Commission on Sustainable Development
EMG	Environmental Management Group
ICCM	International Conference on Chemicals Management
IEG	International Environmental Governance
INC	Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee
IPBES	Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit
JPOI	Johannesburg Plan of Implementation
MEAs	Multilateral environmental agreements
MTS	UNEP Medium Term Strategy
OEWG	Open-ended working group
QSP	Quick Start Programme
SAICM	Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management
SIDS	Small island developing states