

UNCSD INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS: WEDNESDAY, 25 APRIL 2012

On Wednesday, 25 April, delegates continued informal negotiations on the draft outcome document for the UNCSD. Working Group 1 (WG1) continued discussions on Section V (Framework for Action) in morning, afternoon and evening sessions. Working Group 2 (WG2) concluded a second reading of Section II (Renewing Political Commitment), and began a second reading of Section IV (IFSD) in the evening. A number of side events were also convened.

WORKING GROUP 1

SECTION V: FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION AND FOLLOW-UP: A. Priority/key/thematic/cross-sectoral issues and areas: Jobs: On the CST subsection title, "Promoting Full Employment and Decent Work for All," JAPAN asked to qualify employment with "productive," SWITZERLAND added "social protection" and the EU, with the REPUBLIC OF KOREA, proposed "promoting green jobs." The G-77/CHINA called for maintaining its proposed title, which also references social inclusion.

On labor market conditions (CST pre 73 bis), the EU, supported by the REPUBLIC OF KOREA and LIECHTENSTEIN, called for reference to green jobs. Regarding youth employment (CST pre 73 ter), NEW ZEALAND asked to delete "member" before a reference to States, the HOLY SEE requested "all" States, while the US suggested referring instead to "governments."

On sustainable livelihoods and developing human capacity (CST 73), the G-77/CHINA requested deleting reference to new and emerging green sectors, which the REPUBLIC OF KOREA opposed. NORWAY referenced fundamental rights and principles at work.

On opportunities for job creation (CST 74), the EU, with the REPUBLIC OF KOREA, added reference to greening existing jobs. The G-77/CHINA, supported by NEW ZEALAND, asked to delete most of the list identifying specific sectors. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA added text on a global center to promote information and knowledge exchange on green job skills. On infrastructure (CST 75), the G-77/CHINA suggested deleting a list of infrastructure benefits.

Oceans and Seas: On the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) (CST pre 78), TURKEY requested deleting reference to inviting States to ratify and accede to UNCLOS. The EU, MONACO, NORWAY, ICELAND and AUSTRALIA proposed alternative text, strengthening the language on UNCLOS.

On conservation and sustainable management of oceans (CST 78), the US and the EU proposed amendments to the list on regional cooperation initiatives. NORWAY and ICELAND bracketed the list and sought its clarification.

On building national and local capacity (CST 78 bis), ICELAND proposed, and the EU opposed, changing "conservation and management" to "conservation and use."

On achieving green economy goals in the maritime context (CST 78 sext), ICELAND, MONACO and the EU proposed reference to blue economy. The G-77/CHINA proposed deleting this paragraph. On the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment (CST 79), ICELAND sought, but the EU opposed, deletion of the call to consider assessment findings in formulating national, regional and global oceans policies.

On biodiversity in areas within and beyond national jurisdictions (CST 80), ICELAND and the EU preferred their original proposals from the compilation text. The US asked to delete this paragraph. On marine protected areas (CST 80 bis), JAPAN suggested text on sustainable use.

On water quality and biodiversity of oceans (CST 81), the US requested text on implementing the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships. On ocean fertilization (CST 81 ter), NORWAY added text limiting the process to "legitimate scientific research." The G-77/CHINA asked to retain its proposals on ocean acidification (81 bis) and ocean fertilization (81 ter).

On climate change impacts, such as ocean acidification (CST 82), the G-77/CHINA called for replacing this paragraph with its own text (81 bis). The EU, NORWAY and AUSTRALIA suggested merging the two paragraphs.

On fish stocks (CST 83), the EU reserved and the US suggested stronger and more action-oriented language. The G-77/CHINA preferred not to specify goals.

On subsidies related to the fisheries sector (CST 83 bis), NORWAY proposed strengthened language on harmful subsidies, to which ICELAND added "economic" subsidies. JAPAN said it could not accept this. The G-77/CHINA said it wanted to retain its proposal (84 bis).

On illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing (CST 84), the G-77/CHINA preferred working on its proposals (84 alt and 84 ter), while NEW ZEALAND called for merging the three paragraphs. ICELAND, with the EU and JAPAN, proposed deleting "transparent and accountable" regarding regional fisheries management organizations. AUSTRALIA, with MONACO, NORWAY and NEW ZEALAND, added text on monitoring, control and surveillance systems.

On a safe and secure maritime sector (CST 84 bis), the G-77/CHINA preferred working on its proposals (84 bis), the EU added text on International Maritime Organization conventions and codes, and the US added text on the energy efficiency design of new ships.

On assistance for sustainable fisheries (CST 84 quat), NORWAY referenced improving fair access. The G-77/CHINA asked to work on its proposals (84 quat and quint) instead.

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On fulfilling prior commitments regarding small island developing States (SIDS) (CST 85), the G-77/CHINA asked to replace “coordinated” support with “increased and predictable,” and asked to retain its proposals (85 ter).

On efforts to assist SIDS (CST 86), the US and CANADA proposed replacing “increased” with “continued” efforts, and to delete reference to convening the Third International Conference for the Sustainable Development of SIDS in 2014. AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND and MEXICO recommended retaining the paragraph in its original form, while the EU requested clarification of language related to the Conference.

Natural Disasters: On the CST title “Natural Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience,” AUSTRALIA and the EU proposed deleting “natural.” On disaster risk reduction and resilience (CST 87), AUSTRALIA added text on accelerating implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action.

On improved coordination (CST 87 ter), the EU proposed text on “a commitment to develop and strengthen” risk assessment, and JAPAN made reference to initiatives, such as a network of global earth observation systems.

AUSTRALIA proposed replacing text on early warning systems (CST 87 bis and CST 87 ter) with an alternative paragraph on taking “appropriate and effective measures to reduce risk” from the impacts of disasters. Discussion continued in the evening on, *inter alia*, natural disasters, climate change and biodiversity.

WORKING GROUP 2

SECTION II: RENEWING POLITICAL

COMMITMENT: B. Assessing the Progress to Date and the Remaining Gaps: WG2 began with a discussion on vulnerable countries (CST 15 and its subparagraphs). On SIDS, the G-77/CHINA proposed language on significantly increasing efforts to support SIDS. The US, CANADA, JAPAN and the EU said they could not support this proposal. The G-77/CHINA proposed alternative text on reaffirming commitment to further implement the Mauritius Strategy and the Barbados Programme of Action, and underscoring the urgency of finding additional solutions to major challenges facing SIDS. The EU and the US reserved, while SWITZERLAND supported this proposal.

Delegates agreed *ad referendum* on a paragraph referring, *inter alia*, to: assisting least developed countries (LDCs) with implementing the Istanbul Programme of Action and their efforts to achieve sustainable development.

On support for Africa, the US, the EU and JAPAN expressed concern regarding G-77/China-proposed text underscoring lack of political commitment to implement previously agreed international commitments. Co-Chair Ashe offered new text accommodating elements identified by the G-77/China: implementation gaps; urgency and need to fully implement commitments; and reference to internationally agreed commitments. The EU and the US reserved on this proposal.

On special challenges faced by LDCs, landlocked countries and SIDS, BELARUS, supported by the RUSSIAN FEDERATION and the G-77/CHINA, proposed retaining reference to middle-income countries. The G-77/CHINA queried the EU’s proposed text mentioning drought, desertification and floods, emphasizing the focus is on sustainable development.

C. ENGAGING MAJOR GROUPS: On the role of national governments and legislative bodies in promoting sustainable development (CST pre 17), the US proposed and the G-77/CHINA opposed, text on making relevant information based on environmental monitoring and assessments available to all stakeholders.

On access to information and public participation (CST 17), the G-77/CHINA requested reference to Rio Principle 10. The US, supported by CANADA, requested not singling out specific principles. LIECHTENSTEIN requested reference to parliaments and the judiciary. The EU reserved its position on the text.

On facilitating civil society participation (CST 18), the G-77/CHINA questioned the inclusion of education, saying education goes beyond civil society. LIECHTENSTEIN supported reference to freedom of association and assembly. The G-77/CHINA proposed text that acknowledges the importance of enabling all members of civil society to be actively engaged in sustainable development.

On women (CST 18 bis), the US, supported by SWITZERLAND, CANADA, LIECHTENSTEIN, ISRAEL, the EU and NORWAY, proposed including a reference to women’s leadership, while the G-77/CHINA, with the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, preferred women’s empowerment.

On public-private partnerships (CST 19), the G-77/CHINA proposed that the private sector “can contribute” to sustainable development. The EU and the US preferred language reflecting a stronger role for public-private partnerships, and the G-77/CHINA responded that private sector roles differ among countries. SWITZERLAND suggested limiting the paragraph to the role of the private sector only.

On national sustainability accounting and reporting (CST 24), SWITZERLAND proposed, and the US opposed, text that calls upon the UN Secretary-General to establish a process for the development of a reliable and robust global system for sustainability reporting. The G-77/CHINA said it could not support this paragraph, citing lack of clarity on a number of concepts.

On the contribution of the scientific and technological community (CST 20 bis), the US proposed “sharing of legitimately available” knowledge and information. The G-77/CHINA proposed text on bridging the technological gap.

On the participation of indigenous peoples (CST 21), delegates agreed to the paragraph *ad referendum*. On young people’s participation (CST 21 bis), the HOLY SEE emphasized solidarity with future generations. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION proposed language on recognizing the views of children and youth instead of “active participation in decision-making processes.”

On participation of workers and trade unions (CST 21 ter), the G-77/CHINA sought to delete text on the promotion of, *inter alia*, socially and environmentally responsible economic development, social equity and decent work. The EU, supported by SWITZERLAND and the US, preferred retaining the text. WG2 discussions continued into the evening.

IN THE CORRIDORS

WG2 has been in full negotiation mode since Monday when it began its second reading of Sections I and II. Co-Chair Ashe has, in the words of one, been doing “a great job” of working through the paragraphs, proposing text where consensus might be reached. In WG1, delegates were still working their way through Section V, the biggest section of the text. Acknowledging the complexity of this section, Co-Chair Kim said a first reading should be completed by Friday and that delegates should be ready to begin a “real hard ball game” of churning out *ad ref* text when WG2 begins the second reading. Some wondered whether Section V could be finished by then without a late-night or weekend session. By the end of the afternoon, a new version of the streamlined Section III text on green economy was out, reportedly down to 17 pages from 44 at the beginning of the week.

Given this seemingly unbalanced distribution of work between the two WGs, some were still hoping to pass parts of Section V to WG2, but others remained skeptical this would happen. Referring to a group of countries that reportedly pushed very hard to ensure discussions on green economy and Section V were kept together in the same working group, one insider said “I don’t think they will budge on this one.”