



United Nations Press Release



Preparatory Committee for the World Summit on Sustainable Development
Ministerial Level, Fourth Session, Bali, Indonesia, 27 May – 7 June 2002

Department of Public Information • News and Media Division

Preparatory Committee for the World
Summit on Sustainable Development
Fourth Session
1st Meeting (AM)

ENV/DEV/B/3
27 May 2002

POVERTY REDUCTION, SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION, ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION MUST BE

ADDRESSED, INDONESIAN MINISTER TELLS CONFERENCE PREPARATORY MEETING

Preparatory Committee for Sustainable Development Summit Begins Work in Bali

The Commission on Sustainable Development, acting as the fourth and final preparatory committee for the upcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development met this morning in Bali, Indonesia, to begin its work for the current two-week session, with speakers emphasizing the need to reach agreement on a bold, action-oriented outcome document for the Summit.

NABIL MAKARIM, State Minister of Environment of Indonesia, said it was an honour to welcome all participants to Indonesia and Bali. The meeting was a historic opportunity to breath new life and energy into the sustainable development process. Over the next two weeks, the goal was to achieve a number of landmark outcomes, with the involvement of all relevant actors. As the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee had reminded him, this was a conference of people and of hope.

Indonesia was privileged to be entrusted with hosting the meeting, he said. The Government would spare no effort in ensuring a conducive environment for the Committee's work on this crucial issue, which impacted all humankind. The meeting was the final linchpin in the preparations for the Summit. Three overarching objectives must be dealt with: poverty eradication; ensuring sustainable patterns of consumption and production; and environmental protection. The means of implementation must be pursued, he stressed.

Several thousand participants, including representatives of United Nations Member States and over a thousand business, agency and community leaders, are taking part in the meeting, which is scheduled to run until 7 June. Over the course of the session, participants will work to develop an action-oriented programme of action and a political declaration.

NITRIN DESAI, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Development and Secretary-General of the World Summit, which will be held from 26 August to 4 September in Johannesburg, South Africa, said the agenda for the session was a very challenging one and included many elements. Coming to closure on the programme of strengthening implementation of Agenda 21 must be dealt with, he stressed. He hoped the usual United Nations procedure of "decision by exhaustion" would not be followed and that an early conclusion could be reached.

The issue was not just the closure of negotiations -- it was also whether the resulting outcome was bold enough to meet the high expectations that people had for the Summit. Many people saw the Summit as part of a set of conferences defining a new multilateralism. In that regard, he cited the Doha Summit on trade, the International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Monterrey, Mexico, and the upcoming World Summit. Johannesburg was where the international community would determine how sustainability fit into development.

He said the Summit was not about renegotiating policy frameworks -- the challenge was to see how "we can put a commitment to credible action in what we negotiate". That focus on action had to have "clarity about ends and

(more)

means". He then read part of a document that the Worldwide Fund for Nature was circulating, which he thought reflected the concerns of many non-governmental organizations. The text stressed that the Summit would be a failure if a strong action plan was not adopted.

A credible commitment to action must be made, he said. He then noted the areas where Secretary-General Kofi Annan felt strong progress must be made: water, energy, health, agriculture and biodiversity. The Summit had not been called to endorse business as usual -- people wanted change in public policy and private activity. That desire for change must be reflected in the Summit's outcome.

Hans Hoogeveen, Director, Ministry for Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries of the Netherlands, reported on the outcome of the sixth meeting of the Conference on Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. He said the meeting had had three overall objectives. The first was the need to send a crystal-clear message to the Summit on the importance of the role and the contribution of the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in achieving sustainable development and poverty eradication. The second point was the need to move from making plans to implementing them. The third was the need to bring about a shift in accent from conservation to sustainable use of biodiversity.

He said the Ministerial Declaration adopted by the Conference of Parties could stand the test in terms of clarity and ambitiousness, as well as in being action-oriented. Among other things, the Ministers had stressed the importance of the contribution of the Convention on Biological Diversity to the implementation of Agenda 21 and had underlined that at the same time Agenda 21 was indispensable for the implementation of the Convention. They had also resolved the need to strengthen their efforts to put in place measures and instruments to halt and reverse biodiversity loss at all levels by the year 2010 and had asked the Summit to reconfirm that commitment.

He noted the strength of the language in the Declaration on the close relation between the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, sustainable development in general and poverty eradication. The meeting had made a difference for the state of biodiversity in the near future, as well as for the wider goals that would be dealt with at the World Summit.

TUILOMA NERONI SLADE (Samoa) presented the results of the third meeting of the United Nations Informal Consultative Process established by the General Assembly in its resolution 54/33 -- a body, which addresses ocean affairs. The annual report of the Secretary-General had been considered at each meeting of the body, and recommendations had been made. The process had followed a particular format and agenda determined by consensus, and its sessions had seen informed and valuable input from a broad range of groups.

Responsible fisheries, the economic and social impact of marine pollution and degradation, coordination and cooperation in combating piracy and armed robbery at sea were among the issues that had been taken up by the consultative process, he said. This year the subject of the protection and conservation of the marine environment had been tabled again to better coordinate the work of the process in view of the upcoming World Summit. The process had carried out its work successfully, he stressed. He noted that this year marked the 20th anniversary of the opening for signature of the Convention on the Law of the Sea and informed participants that the report of the meeting was now in the hands of the Secretariat.

EMIL SALIM (Indonesia), Chairman of the Commission on Sustainable Development, opened the meeting. He informed the Committee that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had adopted a statement to the current preparatory committee session, which would be circulated at a later date.

In other business this morning, the preparatory committee adopted its agenda (see document A/CONF.199/PC/15) and its proposed organization of work (see document A/CONF.199/PC/15/Add.1/Rev.1). The annex of the latter document contained the proposed timetable for the session and gave a detailed distribution of work among the three Working Groups.

(more)

He said Working Group 1 would be co-chaired by Kyotaka Akasaka (Japan) and Maria Luiza Viotti (Brazil); Working Group II would be co-chaired by Richard Ballhorn (Canada) and Ihab Gameleldin (Egypt); and Working Group III would be co-chaired by Lars-Goran Engfeldt (Sweden) and Ositadimna Anaedu (Nigeria). Jan Kara (Czech Republic) and Dianne Quarless (Jamaica) would act as facilitators of meetings on implementation partnerships and initiatives.

Also this morning, the preparatory committee approved the request of a number of intergovernmental organizations for accreditation at the current meeting.

In other business, the Committee decided that a number of non-governmental organizations (see the annex to document A/CONF.199/PC/20) be accredited at the current meeting. One of the organizations, the World Sindh Institute, was currently being taken up by the United Nations Committee on Non-Governmental Organs, and the preparatory committee would follow its recommendations.

The meeting also took up the accreditation of two non-governmental organizations, the Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy and the Movement for Reconstruction and Development (see Annex II to document A/CONF.199/PC/20). It decided to defer its decision on the former until Friday and decided not to accredit the latter.

The Committee also removed three non-governmental organizations from its accreditation list: Body Shop International; 3663 Food First; and Solar Energy Systems.

The preparatory committee will continue its work this afternoon at 3 p.m. in conference room 1, when it will begin its multi-stakeholder dialogue segment.

* * * * *