



**Governing Council
of the United Nations
Environment Programme**

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Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum
Eleventh session
Bali, Indonesia, 21–22 February 2010

**Report of the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum on
the work of its eleventh session**

I. Opening of the session

1. The eleventh session of the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum (formerly known as the Global Civil Society Forum)¹ was held at the Bali International Convention Centre in Nusa Dua, Bali, Indonesia, on 21 and 22 February 2010. The Forum was opened at 9.25 a.m. on Sunday, 21 February 2010, by Mr. Olivier Deleuze, Director, Liaison Office to the European Union Regional Office for Europe, Division of Regional Cooperation, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
2. Ms. Sascha Gabizon, Chair, Major Groups Facilitating Committee, welcomed the participants.
3. Opening statements were made by Ms. Angela Cropper, Deputy Executive Director, UNEP, and Mr. Henri Bastaman, Deputy Minister for Environmental Communication and Community Empowerment, Indonesia.
4. In her opening remarks, the Deputy Executive Director said that the reform process initiated as part of the medium-term strategy of UNEP was on track, albeit at a slower pace than desired. She described partnerships as central to the new mode of working and invited more participation and proposals in that regard. Referring to the turbulent events of 2009, she said that the outcome of the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Copenhagen in December 2009, had resulted in a perceived dent in the credibility of the United Nations system as a whole. The current meeting provided a genuine opportunity to demonstrate effectiveness through seminal and relevant discussion and quality outcomes. There was an urgent need for a concerted effort to restore the credibility of the United Nations and to show the Organization's continued relevance.
5. The first simultaneous extraordinary meetings of the conferences of the parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, a groundbreaking event for the United Nations, were ambitious and of great significance for international environmental governance. Synergies among the conventions would mainly be found in the implementation of the conventions at the national level. Representatives could play a role in that implementation and in ensuring delivery and positive effects on the ground.

¹ The terms "major groups and stakeholders" and "civil society" are used interchangeably throughout the document.

6. She expressed the hope that the successful process begun at the twenty-fifth session of the Governing Council, under which a regionally representative, consultative group of ministers or high-level representatives on international environmental governance had been established, could be carried forward and used as a good beginning for environment ministers in shaping the environmental agenda for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development to be held in 2012 (known as “Rio + 20” in reference to the twentieth anniversary of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development), one of whose themes was to be environmental governance. Commenting on the continued marginalization of the environment dimension, she said that that conference would provide an opportunity to bring environmental concerns closer to the heart of the sustainable development agenda.

7. With regard to the UNEP Green Economy Initiative, she said that the groundwork was being laid in terms of policy frameworks, and a global study entitled “The economics of ecosystems and biodiversity” (referred to as TEEB) was being undertaken to help attain the elusive goal of green accounting. She acknowledged that scant progress had been made in preventing the loss of global biodiversity and, suggesting that the designation of 2010 as the International Year of Biodiversity offered a chance to recover from that failure and regroup, she urged representatives to become involved in the process with a view to establishing an international platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services. Such establishment would mark a significant milestone and would serve as a foundation for consolidate and synthesizing biodiversity science.

8. In addition, she called for an agreement on access and benefit-sharing under the Convention on Biological Diversity to be finalized, citing the good, yet underrecognized, stewardship of resources in many communities, for example through traditional knowledge from farmers and indigenous peoples, and the fact that that pillar of the Convention had received less attention than its other two pillars. Noting that 2011 had been designated as the International Year of Forests, she said that the international community was on the brink of formally agreeing on a financial mechanism within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to compensate the stewards of those services. The year 2011 would provide an opportunity to press forward on that and go beyond, looking not just at the initiative to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD) but also at sustainable management of forests and enhancing forest cover (“REDD-plus”), with its ensuing benefits and co-benefits. In conclusion, she urged representatives to participate actively and carry the Forum and its valuable work forward.

9. Mr. Bastaman, in his opening remarks, welcomed the representatives. He spoke of the opportunity afforded by the current meeting to civil society groups from Indonesia to participate in the discussions through informal gatherings. He expressed his Government’s support for the synergies and green economy initiatives and, in that context, looked forward to greater overall focus on oceans, commenting on their importance to small island developing States. He also called for greater emphasis to be laid on REDD-plus. Indonesia had recently enacted legislation on environmental management, and an access and benefit-sharing regime which would be of significant benefit to the country’s indigenous peoples.

II. Organization of work

A. Election of officers

10. The following officers were elected:

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|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Chair: | Ms. Sascha Gabizon, Executive Director, Women in Europe for a Common Future and Chair, Major Groups Facilitating Committee (several sessions were moderated by other chairs) |
| Vice-Chair: | Ms. Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim, Coordinator, Association des femmes peuples autochtones du Tchad and representative of the Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee |
| Rapporteur: | Mr. Valerio Lucchesi, International Federation of Agricultural Producers |

B. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

11. The Chair presented a provisional agenda for the session, which the Forum participants adopted without amendment.

C. Attendance

12. The Forum was attended by 111 representatives of 69 major groups and stakeholders organizations from the following countries: Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Cambodia, Canada, Chad, China, Croatia, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Japan, Jordan, Malaysia, Mongolia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Togo, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Viet Nam.

13. The Forum was also attended by representatives of UNEP. The full list of participants has been made available as document UNEP/GCSF/11/INF/1.²

III. Session 1: First simultaneous extraordinary meetings of the conferences of the parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions on enhancing cooperation and coordination among the three conventions

14. The focus of the session was the role of major groups and stakeholders in the implementation of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, and the issues at stake regarding synergies between the three conventions. A keynote presentation by Mr. Nelson Sabogal, Chief, Convention Services and Governance Unit, Secretariat of the Basel Convention, was followed by reactions from three panellists representing major groups and stakeholders: Ms. Mariann Lloyd-Smith, Co-Chair, International POPs Elimination Network; Mr. Jim Puckett, Executive Director, Basel Action Network; and Mr. Allan Jones, Executive Director, Canadian Chlorine Chemistry Council, representing the International Council of Chemical Associations. The presentations were followed by a discussion of the issues raised.

A. Keynote presentation

15. Mr. Sabogal began his presentation on information issues regarding synergies between the three conventions with a brief history of the synergies process, including the establishment of the ad hoc joint working group on enhancing cooperation and coordination among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions in 2006, the adoption of the decisions by the conferences of the parties to the three conventions that had set in motion the establishment of joint services among the conventions, and the process for the first simultaneous extraordinary meetings of the conferences of the parties to the three conventions.

16. He outlined the substantive issues on the agenda of those meetings, which included decisions on joint activities, joint managerial functions, long-term establishment of joint services, synchronization of budget cycles, joint audits of accounts and a review mechanism and follow-up of any arrangements put in place. Representatives would also consider reports on activities or proposals for joint institutions resulting from the decision on enhancing cooperation and coordination among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, including on the funding of the chemicals and wastes management initiative.

B. Presentations by panellists

17. Ms. Lloyd-Smith gave a presentation on opportunities and challenges for non-governmental organizations resulting from synergies between the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions,

2 www.unep.org/civil-society/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=ekE7mvDJQz8%3d&tabid=2910&language=en-US

which together tackled key aspects in the life cycle of chemicals. She briefly described the work of the National Toxic Network (in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific) and the International POPs Elimination Network. The green economy embraced several concepts applicable to control of chemical pollution, including life-cycle management and a multi-stakeholder, multisectoral approach. Major groups and stakeholders could, if accorded a role, share enhanced information, raise awareness, boost communication and outreach, develop capacity-building and training, help to coordinate legislation, undertake monitoring and support enforcement. Successful synergy must be based on equity for all countries and stakeholders, and must take account of the four pillars of chemical reform: the right to know; the principle that, without any available data, there should be no involvement in the market; the precautionary principle; and hazardous chemical substitution and elimination. In conclusion, she stressed the need for civil society participation and for a universal commitment to zero waste and a toxin-free future.

18. Mr. Puckett described his mixed experience during his years of being a non-governmental-organization activist for the Basel Convention. While the Ban Amendment in 1995 had evoked much pride and satisfaction, the Convention's track record since then had been disappointing. He described how a number of States had undermined efforts under the Convention, which suffered from a meagre budget and limited support. He expressed support for the synergies process, pointing out that it could put an end to territorialism, lead to the participation of new experts, promote new funding and institute life-cycle thinking, among other things. The needs of developing countries should be at the forefront of all new initiatives, given that those countries bore disproportionate burdens. Furthermore, there was a need for synergies to push the process forwards rather than backwards and for funding to be equitable, or at the very least commensurate with a fair assessment of where the greatest problems were located. He also stressed that major groups and stakeholders organizations should be granted full access to decision-making processes, which was not currently the case. He called for the synergies process to forge a new path together for the sake of the planet and future generations.

19. Mr. Jones identified several ways in which major groups and stakeholders could assist the synergies process. First, looking to the concept known as "think synergies first", he said that the parties and secretariats should explore opportunities for joint activities that could produce increased clarity and coordination at the local, national and regional levels. Second, parties could look at their own national structures to allow a more effective coordination of activities. Third, he encouraged parties and observers to take a life-cycle approach to initiatives under the synergies process or through related bodies, such as the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, stressing his organization's commitment to the Strategic Approach.

C. Discussion

20. In the ensuing discussion, representatives raised a number of issues relating to the synergies process. The Chair began by posing questions to stimulate the discussion, asking, for example, how it would be possible to strengthen the three conventions, how life-cycle management issues could be addressed and what the benefits of synergies at the national level would be. One representative pointed out that some conventions, such as the Bamako Convention on the Ban of the Import into Africa and the Control of Transboundary Movement and Management of Hazardous Wastes within Africa, had been adopted some years previously but were not in operation. While the process to bring conventions together was laudable, it appeared that some conventions were being forgotten. In response, Mr. Sabogal pointed out that the implementation of that Convention depended not on the secretariat but on its parties. Other regional conventions had entered into force, the most active being the Convention to Ban the Importation into Forum Island Countries of Hazardous and Radioactive Wastes and to Control the Transboundary Movement and Management of Hazardous Wastes within the South Pacific Region (Waigani Convention). Mr. Puckett said that the work of the Bamako Convention had been hamstrung by a lack of resources. While the secretariat of the Basel Convention had offered to prepare the relevant documentation, no funding had been forthcoming to hold a conference of the parties. He stressed that, if synergies between the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions were developed more fully, there was room to bring regional conventions into play and provide assistance.

21. Several representatives drew attention to the importance of compliance. One noted that, while it was all well and good to have countries signing new conventions, their best intentions would come to naught if there was no effective mechanism to ensure compliance with the relevant provisions. Another representative suggested that non-compliance with a convention could often have an underlying explanation. For example, a convention might contain provisions with which a country did not agree.

Those reasons should be heard and considered with a view to ensuring heightened compliance.

22. In response, Mr. Sabogal said that a compliance mechanism under the Basel Convention had been adopted in 2002. The role of the secretariat, however, was to support the parties in their work and not to manage compliance. The secretariat bore a weighty burden in analysing reporting under the mechanism, even though the number of parties reporting was falling. More funding was required, given the secretariat's scant financial and human resources. Ms. Lloyd-Smith said that no political will existed with regard to compliance. She called for the profile of chemical safety to be raised, so that Governments would more fully realize the important nature of chemical issues. Mr. Puckett said that the compliance mechanism under the Basel Convention was weak. As there was no civil society trigger to initiate non-compliance proceedings, civil society was forced to call attention to cases of non-compliance through the media.

23. The Chair said that there were instances in which chemicals had been blocked from being listed under the conventions. She drew attention to the recent deliberations of the Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention at its fourth meeting, in which some parties had blocked the listing of endosulfan and chrysotile asbestos in the annexes to that Convention, the recommendation to list them made by its subsidiary body, the Chemical Review Committee, notwithstanding. Ms. Lloyd-Smith said that those actions had been taken by several parties with a vested self-interest in keeping the chemicals from being listed in the Convention. That the Convention did not provide for voting was a major issue, as national and sectoral self-interest could block the ability of the rest of the planet to deal with threats. Mr. Puckett said that it was tyrannical that a single country could block a decision in a world in which democracy was commonplace. Such conduct was not accepted in national parliaments, so there should be no reason for it to be accepted in the United Nations system. The Basel Convention did provide for voting, and the threat of doing so had in fact pushed through some decisions in the past, such as the adoption of the 1995 Ban Amendment.

24. One representative said that the comments pertaining to endosulfan and chrysotile asbestos were a veiled reference to his country. He argued that some proposals for listing chemicals in the various conventions were made out of self-interest, as a handful of countries were keen to corner the market for some chemicals. He called for the objections voiced by his country to be considered in an open and transparent manner. Another representative said that her country was a major user of crocidolite and the substance was a major source of employment. She therefore asked whether, given its seeming harmful properties, her country should continue to use it and whether alternatives were available.

25. Implementation was raised by some representatives as an important issue. Mr. Puckett pointed out that many developing countries lacked domestic legislation on chemicals issues. One representative said that that issue was not unique to developing countries, as many developed countries, including some which were signatories to European Union legislation, had failed to enshrine such provisions in their domestic legislation. One representative said that her country had had experience of synergies but there had been scant results on the ground. Stronger mechanisms for implementation were therefore required. Ms. Lloyd-Smith said that, in the experience of her organization with small island developing States, there had been much willingness among Governments to begin implementation, but confusion had ensued due to such factors as unclear reporting requirements and the existence of multiple actors. She suggested that information related to the control of harmful chemicals could be presented in a clearer and simpler manner.

26. Mr. Sabogal said that the secretariat of the Basel Convention had sought funding from the European Union to host two implementation workshops, as the secretariat had insufficient capacity and funding to be able to take such action alone. Mr. Jones said that the chemicals industry was undertaking activities that encompassed support for capacity-building and information exchange as part of the Responsible Care Global Charter and the Global Product Strategy launched by the International Council of Chemical Associations. It had also helped to finance support for the sound management of chemicals and improving chemical safety.

27. On the issue of considering chemicals throughout their life cycle, one representative said that the sound management of chemicals throughout the value chain was a shared responsibility. Many industry bodies had committed themselves to initiatives, but greater dialogue with relevant stakeholders and others was required. Mr. Jones said that chemical production constantly looked upstream and considered all aspects of the value chain within a life-cycle approach to chemicals management. Ms. Lloyd-Smith said that it was crucial, when designing a new chemical, already to be considering the waste phase. Rather than viewing the cycle as being from cradle to grave, producers should think of a cycle from cradle to cradle, whereby the substance would be recycled. Mr. Puckett said that the views of civil society should be considered at the beginning of the chemical development process.

28. Regarding the clean-up of wastes, Mr. Puckett pointed out that European legislation included extended producer responsibility provisions, whereby producers – not consumers or Governments – took responsibility for the environmentally safe management of their product when it was no longer useful or was discarded. Such provisions were, however, most needed in developing countries, where they usually did not exist. His organization had suggested to producers that, as they were already operating a takeback system in Europe, they could do the same elsewhere, but had been met by blanket refusal. He called for industry bodies to accept that extended producer responsibility was a concept that should be implemented worldwide. Mr. Jones said that the Responsible Care programme was an initiative under which chemicals companies, through their national associations, worked together to improve their health, safety and environmental performance and to communicate with stakeholders about their products and processes. The programme demonstrated the industry's commitment to the issue.

29. Summarizing the discussion, Mr. Jones drew attention to the challenges and concerns that had been raised. He welcomed the establishment of the Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee by the Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention. The Committee had grown and had succeeded in seeing new substances listed in the annexes to that Convention. The Committee's success had been underpinned by a willingness to work together and resolve issues, a *modus operandi* that should be taken on board in all discussions.

30. Mr. Puckett said that the test of the synergies process would be, among other things, whether it was of benefit to developing countries primarily and whether funding would be equitable and commensurate with the mandate of each convention. Any suggestions of pitching the process to the lowest common denominator would be harmful to the process and should be resisted, as should any attempts to prevent civil society and industry bodies, among others, from becoming involved in the process.

31. Mr. Sabogal stressed that the secretariats had committed themselves to the synergies process and were open to dialogue. Partnerships had been launched as encouragement in that regard. It was easy to criticize the conventions and their secretariats from the outside looking in, but any criticism should be weighed against limited funding, difficulties of communication with developing countries and the challenges involved in promoting non-standard thinking, among other things.

32. Ms. Lloyd-Smith said that information on the synergies process was lacking. For example, there appeared to be no material documenting how the various conventions interacted with one another and how they would be affected by the synergies process. She noted that there was a need for greater sharing of information. Consumers should be aware of the content of their consumables and there should be equity for all countries, stakeholders and generations. Any reform should be predicated on four pillars of chemical reform.

IV. Session 2: Environment in the multilateral system I

33. The session focused on the issue of international environmental governance and sustainable development, and on the role of major groups and stakeholders could play in shaping that agenda. A keynote presentation by Mr. John Scanlon, Principal Adviser to the Executive Director of UNEP, was followed by reactions from two panellists representing major groups and stakeholders: Ms. Elenita Dano, Action Group on Erosion, Technology and Concentration; and Ms. Maria Ivanova, Assistant Professor of Government and Environmental Policy, College of William and Mary, United States of America. The presentations were followed by a discussion of the issues raised. The session was chaired by Ms. Anabella Rosemberg, International Trade Union Confederation.

A. Keynote presentation

34. Mr. Scanlon outlined the main themes of the eleventh special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum and highlighted opportunities for involvement by representatives of major groups and stakeholders. The year 2009 had seen extraordinary developments with regard to environmental issues, especially climate change, and the discussions would build on those developments, with a particular focus on the green economy, environmental governance, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012 and climate change. The 2012 conference would be critical for reorienting the international community's approach to sustainable development. New ideas and fresh thinking were needed on issues such as the relationship between the

economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development. There were important linkages between what the ministers would debate and the decisions to be taken by the Governing Council. He highlighted decisions for which input from representatives of civil society would be welcome.

B. Presentations by panellists

35. Ms. Dano said that the events of the Copenhagen conference of December 2009 had provoked renewed discussion on the need for strong international environmental governance based on United Nations principles, including the principle of sovereign equality. The annual Forum was not sufficient to formulate coherent input into the debate on environmental governance, and civil society organizations, to be effective and respected partners of UNEP, needed to be proactive rather than reactive and to engage in a continuing targeted debate on the matter. One example of an area requiring a civil society response was the five objectives formulated by the consultative group of ministers or high-level representatives on international environmental governance as part of the Belgrade process, wherein the proposals related to the science-policy interface gave no comment on the responsibility to assess technologies that might have an impact on the environment. That was particularly important where technological solutions touted as solving environmental problems, such as the use of biofuels, gave rise to further environmental problems. In the debate on environmental governance, and the role of UNEP, it was vital to go beyond objectives and functions and engage in the actual modalities and mechanisms of implementation. Strong regional participation was an essential component of that process.

36. Ms. Ivanova spoke about how major groups and stakeholders could add value to discussions on environmental issues. There were two narratives about international environmental governance: according to one narrative, institutional diversity, the large number of multilateral environmental agreements and the volume of activity associated with them were signs of systemic health; according to the other, the system was dysfunctional, with excessive fragmentation and competition for resources. While both narratives were too complex and abstract for the general public, major stakeholders as part of civil society had the power to create more effective and persuasive narratives reflecting successes and failures in international environmental governance and the reasons for them so as to foster imaginative thinking, strengthen public engagement and inspire a new generation of leaders true to the founding principles of UNEP. Achieving those objectives required clearer definition of the environmental pillar and how it related to the social and economic pillars. She recommended that major groups and stakeholders representatives should be allowed to participate in the processes of the open-ended working group of ministers, set up by Governing Council decision 21/21 to study international environmental governance issues and policy options; that an advisory body of civil society members should be established to advise the working group; and that a clearing house for best practices in governance should be created.

C. Discussion

37. In the ensuing discussion, several representatives commented on the status of UNEP within the United Nations system and the degree to which that status was reflected in the political and financial commitments to UNEP, given the increasing profile being accorded to the environment. Mr. Scanlon observed that the core annual budget of UNEP stood at approximately \$90 million, while the Global Environment Facility received more than \$1 billion yearly. One representative wondered whether the establishment of, for example, a world environment organization might be necessary or feasible, to which Ms. Ivanova responded that, given the drastic pace of some changes in the climate, a nimbler body such as a security council for the environment might be preferable. She added that little could be genuinely achieved in environmental governance without strong enforcement through an effective compliance mechanism.

38. A representative of the chemicals industry said that in her firm's experience consumers would not pay for greener products if they were perceived to be too costly. She added that global environmental and financial governance needed to go hand in hand. Another representative stressed the need to ensure that companies did not simply pay lip service to environmental concerns, adopting the "green" label without changing their practices.

39. Regarding the question of how to increase the engagement of major groups and stakeholders organizations in efforts to improve international environmental governance, Ms. Dano said that civil society organizations needed to participate proactively in those efforts, taking as a starting point the

recommendations in the report of the Secretary-General on enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners, in particular the private sector.³

V. Session 3: Dialogue with Mr. Achim Steiner, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme and Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations

A. Statement by the Executive Director

40. A dialogue took place between the Forum participants and Mr. Achim Steiner, Executive Director of UNEP, who began the dialogue with an introductory statement on the context of the current meetings (of the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum and the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum) within the context of the global environmental agenda. He reflected first on the major events of the previous 12 months, including the aftermath of the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which had left many of the core constituency of the environmental agenda frustrated and confused. He expressed his opinion that the voice of major groups and stakeholders could have made itself heard earlier and with greater impact in the period preceding the Copenhagen conference. On the other hand, some significant breakthroughs had been made, including, for example, in the energy and mobility sectors, as the environmental agenda had become more prominent in public discourse than ever before, and there was a danger, in striving for swifter and more ambitious responses to the increasingly complex challenges facing the planet, of neglecting to study those victories to identify what had made them possible.

41. There was a need to recast the paradigm for approaching the environmental sustainability agenda, which would ultimately drive the future of society. In the 1970s and 1980s, issues had often been dealt with through formulation of an instrument, resolution or other measure, and progress gauged by the number of decisions made. That process had fragmented environmental governance and urgently required rethinking. The environmental community needed to be credible in its response, recognizing that growth would occur but setting out coherent policies for changing the nature of that growth. The environmental dialogue had to be economically literate, and the emergence of the "green growth" concept had begun to recalibrate that conversation, which had to be at the centre of multilateral decision-making. In the present International Year of Biodiversity, the same consideration should be applied to the value of biodiversity and ecosystems services, with solid economic arguments presented to support investment in those services. With regard to climate change, recent setbacks notwithstanding, the science remained intact, and it was vital for negotiations to continue under the umbrella of the Framework Convention on Climate Change.

42. Turning to UNEP itself, he said that reforms and a redirection of focus had taken the organization quite a distance forward in recent years. UNEP had invested in strengthening its regional offices and had succeeded in expanding its funding, such that the financial envelope for 2009 had been the largest ever available to the organization. Given a complex, changing agenda, however, further restructuring of UNEP was essential if it was to live up to the expectations of Governments, civil society and a wide variety of other partners. A limited, technocratic approach was no longer feasible; strategic, political and tactical issues were moving to the foreground in the run-up to the Conference on Sustainable Development in Brazil in 2012, the outcomes of which could prescribe the environmental agenda for a decade or more.

B. Dialogue with the Executive Director

43. In the ensuing discussion, representatives raised a number of issues germane to the substance of the Executive Director's statement. One asked what an international environmental governance system might look like if it could be built from scratch at the current time, and how an exponential change in the way the planet is managed could be achieved. In response, the Executive Director said that many of the environment-related conventions and agreements had indeed been visionary, and the ingredients to make international environmental governance function successfully were well known: clear policies and

3 A/64/337.

agreements, a proper alignment of finance and mandate, and strong compliance mechanisms. Often, however, society was too busy managing agreements to see clearly where the synergies lay and to learn from examples of good governance practice.

44. Another representative noted the relative weakness of environmental ministries in many countries, and the ensuing disadvantage of UNEP working only with those ministries. The Executive Director said that the concept of the green economy had the potential to empower ministers of environment by according them a stronger role in budgetary decision-making. That ministers of environment even existed was a significant step forward compared to some decades previously, and many had increasingly wide portfolios and growing responsibility in multilateral discussions.

45. In response to a question about UNEP support to environmental academic institutions, the Executive Director said that such support was typical of the work undertaken by UNEP in partnering with a broad community of professionals. The Global Reporting Initiative, founded in 1997 with UNEP support to promote high-quality sustainability reporting, was an example.

46. Responding to a question about the level of UNEP engagement at the national level in Africa, he said that UNEP was faced with difficult choices on how best to allocate its limited resources, and it was more cost-effective, and in keeping with the organization's mandate, to concentrate on a strategic regional presence from which it could operate in an advisory capacity at the national level.

47. Several representatives spoke of the difficulties related to making sustainable production profitable and competitive in the marketplace, given that exploitative businesses could operate with lower costs. The Executive Director said that it was necessary to influence the way in which markets operated, for example through tax reform and policy adjustments. Farmers, as managers and custodians of the ecosystem, should receive rewards commensurate with their carbon footprint, and a UNEP project was engaged in assessing the carbon footprint of various types of farming. Where energy was concerned, the recent development of wind and geothermal power in Kenya had shown that renewable energy alternatives could be economically and politically feasible. In summary, economic and policy instruments needed to be developed to ensure that producers and consumers were not punished for following a green agenda. While he recognized the concern over companies engaging in the practice known as "greenwashing", or falsely claiming to be environmentally friendly, of greater priority was ensuring that a broad pathway towards a green economy was set in every sector.

48. Some representatives raised concerns about the human cost of some agricultural and industrial practices and advocated the development of alternative indicators to reflect the true costs of production. The Executive Director responded that there was a need for an open discourse on the green economy and the issue of fair employment, and there had been dialogue between the International Labour Organization and UNEP on the matter. While the green economy had the potential to embrace a much wider cross-section of the productive community than the modern market economy, including indigenous peoples, it nonetheless had to withstand the same social integrity tests as any other economic model. The revolution in the quantity and quality of information being made available through modern technology had greatly enhanced society's ability to provide data to support the environmental agenda; to monitor indicators and undertake prompt responses; and to identify and act on interlinkages (for example among climate change, biodiversity, employment and economic opportunities) that were previously little understood. In particular, the economic data being amassed made it possible to deploy arguments never before applied in an environmental context, drawing in politicians and the private sector.

49. One representative expressed concern about the limited access to international forums by indigenous peoples. Another said that the green economy needed a fair and equitable approach by which to obtain support from the grass-roots level.

50. The Executive Director, referring to the REDD process, which would leverage climate change finance options, acknowledged the risks associated with the process, calling for them to be addressed to avoid a purely money-driven process in that context. He also saw the need to link the various agendas emerging on the subject. He reaffirmed his belief that UNEP remained the best forum to take forward the environmental agenda over the next generation, and the engagement of major groups and stakeholders was vital to its success. He mentioned that climate change needed strong leadership and that civil society was fundamental in providing it. He also called upon major groups and stakeholders to think big and drive the agenda forward, especially during the crucial period leading up to the Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012.

VI. Session 4: Environment in the multilateral system II

51. The session focused on two topics for discussion at the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum: the green economy, and biodiversity and ecosystems. Ms. Mildred Mkandla, EarthCare Africa Policy Monitoring Institute, chaired the session.

A. Green economy

52. A keynote presentation by Mr. Benjamin Simmons, Legal Officer, Economics and Trade Branch, UNEP, was followed by reactions from two panellists representing major groups and stakeholders: Ms. Sally Jeanrenaud, Coordinator, Green Economy Coalition; and Ms. Gabizon Executive Director, Women in Europe for a Common Future. The presentations were followed by a discussion of the issues raised.

1. Keynote presentation

53. Mr. Simmons gave a presentation on the green economy and the manner in which UNEP was responding to the issue. Looking first at the global context, he drew attention to the financial, fuel and food crises, which were central to the sustainability problems being faced by the planet, requiring a rethink of development and business models. In response the United Nations General Assembly, by its resolution 64/236 of 24 December 2009, had decided to organize, in 2012, a United Nations conference on sustainable development, in which the green economy would be a theme.

54. In the meantime, UNEP had developed the following working definition of the green economy: “A system of economic activities related to the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services that result in improved human well-being over the long term, while not exposing future generations to significant environmental risks and ecological scarcities.” He said that the linkage between the green economy and sustainable production and consumption was critical. He then described the main features of the UNEP-led Green Economy Initiative, which aimed to advise countries in greening their economies by working with a wide range of partners to provide cutting-edge economic analysis and research products. One of the Initiative’s main outputs would be a report which would use economic analyses and modelling approaches to demonstrate the advantages of investing in greening the economy.

2. Presentations by panellists

55. Ms. Jeanrenaud said that a change of mood had occurred over the previous 12 months: early in 2009 the financial crisis had been seen to threaten the green agenda, whereas currently the green economy was increasingly being viewed as a potential solution to the financial crisis. The Green Economy Coalition was a multisectoral, multi-stakeholder group with a vision to promote a resilient economy that provided a better quality of life for all within the ecological limits of one planet. It recognized that the challenges faced required a convergent rather than a divergent approach, and stressed the importance of coalition building between like-minded entities as a strong advocacy tool in promoting the transition to a green, inclusive and value-driven economy. At the first meeting of the Coalition in March 2009, the dialogue had sought a balance between two important focal points – the aspirational, which recognized that the old economy had failed and there was a need to develop alternative visions of development; and the practical, which recognized the need to present down-to-earth options and grasp concrete opportunities, for example, by writing to high-level meetings advocating green economic solutions.

56. Ms. Gabizon spoke of the relevance of the green economy for women. She said that discrepancies in how gross domestic product was measured – for example, placing no value on women’s unpaid work – showed the need for indicators that placed truer value on flows in an economy, discouraging waste and encouraging recycling. Women were often at a disadvantage in the green economy, lacking access to funds to set up small businesses and being subject to poor working conditions. Resources should be made available to encourage sustainable employment and entrepreneurship among women, taking into consideration women’s needs and skills. UNEP could assist by establishing clear criteria and principles on what was considered “green”, taking account of social justice, health and gender equity, and adopting a firmer position on issues such as greenwashing and child scavenging.

3. Discussion

57. In the ensuing discussion, some representatives took issue with the UNEP working definition of the green economy, one saying that it was little more than business as usual and that, while it mentioned the exposure of future generations to environmental risks, it included nothing about rectifying the situation for current generations that had already been exposed to those risks. Mr. Simmons said that it was difficult to encapsulate such a complex topic in one brief statement, but acknowledged that the working definition needed adjustment to accommodate the concerns expressed.

58. Another representative, recalling the pioneering work of E. F. Schumacher and Rachel Carson, said that the environmental debate was not new – what was new was that there was now a global audience, and the green economy movement needed to respond accordingly by delving deep into systemic issues, for example, by advocating the greening of stock markets. Mr. Simmons agreed that there was a new interest by Governments in exploring green issues and related job creation. Ms. Jeanrenaud said that a further innovation was the move towards investment in green sectors, such as marine ecology, supported by demonstration of the potential economic returns that were available. The green economy, she added, was not anti-growth, but espoused growth with a more responsible attitude, taking into account social and environmental values.

59. Another representative said that, while major groups and stakeholders were good at bringing forward the science, the challenge remained of convincing the decision makers, country by country, that the green economy was a cross-sectoral issue in the national interest. Mr. Simmons said that UNEP was often requested to help in that regard, and would first assist in developing a scoping study offering a macroeconomic view of the country, which civil society could then take to the next level.

60. One representative asked what the relevance of the green economy was to those in a subsistence economy. Ms. Gabizon said that Women for Our Common Future had one project, for energy-efficient stoves in Nigeria, that had passed the Clean Development Mechanism criteria, but it had taken a great deal of work and the system was not geared for such projects.

B. Biodiversity and ecosystems

61. A keynote presentation by Mr. Tim Kasten, Deputy Director, Division of Environmental Policy Implementation, UNEP, was followed by reactions from three panellists representing major groups and stakeholders: Mr. Mark Lonsdale, Chief of Division, Australian Commonwealth Scientific and Research Organization, and a member of Diversitas/International Council for Science; Mr. Neil Franklin, Sustainability Director, Asia Pacific Resources International Holdings Ltd., and member of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development; and Mr. Nicholas King, Executive Secretary, Global Biodiversity Information Facility. The presentations were followed by a discussion of the issues raised.

1. Keynote presentation

62. In his presentation on biodiversity and ecosystems, Mr. Kasten recalled the findings of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and stressed the need to reverse the drastic decline in ecosystems by addressing the key factors effecting change, including overexploitation of resources, the spread of invasive species, habitat loss and climate change. Assessment of the economic value of ecosystem services was a powerful advocacy tool, and its use was exemplified in the TEEB study and the REDD initiative, which had found wide application. All resources and their uses should be included in any valuation, taking into account the potential skewing effect of subsidies and failure to give a monetary value to loss of habitat.

63. He said that what was not measured could not be managed effectively and stressed the importance of the science-policy interface. Briefly describing the work of a possible intergovernmental platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services, should it be established, he identified the need for a new mechanism to strengthen knowledge at all levels and build capacity, saying that the issue would be on the agenda of the third ad hoc intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder meeting on the subject. Other opportunities for furthering the discussion on ecosystems and biodiversity were presented by the designation of 2010 as the International Year for Biodiversity and by the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to be held in Nagoya, Japan, in October 2010. In conclusion, he said that urgent action based on new, carefully defined targets was necessary to achieve progress.

2. Presentations by panellists

64. Mr. Lonsdale spoke of the role of science in managing biodiversity and ecosystems, with a focus on research, observation and assessment. Dealing first with improving research, he said that it was not just a question of financing but also a matter of strengthening overall capacity to deal with the biodiversity crisis. To achieve that, research needed to move from a concentration on definition to one of undertaking research to provide practical solutions to actual problems in a process of adaptive management. Initiatives were beginning to put in place a global network for collecting biodiversity observations. Gaps in assessment were a concern, and the follow-up to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment was high on the agenda as part of the discussions in the lead-up to the expected third ad hoc intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder meeting on an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services. Several types of assessment gap could be identified, including that between the data that existed and the usability of those data, due to differences in methodology, lack of access to data and the failure to integrate traditional knowledge. The key gap, however, was between science and policy, and there was a need for improved dialogue to enable scientists and policymakers to act in greater harmony. He concluded by stressing the importance of peer review, supported by a consistent and rigorous code of practice, to ensure that the data supporting scientific arguments were not called into question.

65. Mr. Franklin spoke of the role of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development in promoting sustainable forest management, and the practices of his own company within that context. The Council had a membership of over 200 companies. Within its ecosystems focus area it aimed to assist member companies with monitoring and assessment, mitigation, ecosystem governance and identifying business opportunities for sustainably managed ecosystem services. A number of tools were available, including *The Corporate Ecosystem Services Review*. In the forestry sector a system of mosaic plantation had proved effective, intermixing managed and developed areas with protected high-conservation-value forest. Citing the example of Riau province in Indonesia, he said the system had demonstrated high conservation and social values, in addition to having wider benefits for carbon capture and emission reduction. In conclusion, he said that businesses could be effective partners in managing resources for the needs of today's society while not compromising those of future generations.

66. Mr. King gave a presentation on the role of the Global Biodiversity Information Facility in bridging the data divide. He said that climate change, biodiversity loss and ecosystem change were transboundary problems with a huge negative economic impact, and to ensure an effective response to those problems it was necessary to mobilize and share knowledge in ways that could be used by decision makers. The Global Biodiversity Information Facility had been set up with a mandate to facilitate free and open access to biodiversity data worldwide, via the internet, to underpin scientific research, conservation and sustainable development – for example, through data sharing online via a network of participating institutions, North-South capacity-building and technology transfer, building regional and national capacity, and transboundary cooperation. While challenges to sharing data remained – including variability in the types and standards of data, providing incentives for sharing, issues of security and intellectual property rights, identification of needs, and financing the system – large strides had been made in increasing the amount of available information (including indigenous knowledge), which contributed significantly to strengthening the science-policy interface. In summary, he said that the Facility was a working example of a multilateral agreement to build a common platform for biodiversity-related cooperation.

3. Discussion

67. During the ensuing discussion one representative asked about the input that major groups and stakeholders might have into the proposed intergovernmental platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services, given the previous tendency within UNEP to exclude civil society from science-based discussion. She also asked how the platform would link with the subsidiary bodies of other multilateral environmental agreements, including the Convention on Biological Diversity. In response, Mr. Kasten said that two meetings on the platform had been held to date, with representatives at the second meeting identifying a clear need for such a mechanism to improve the science-policy interface, with civil society and national scientists playing a critical role in capacity-building. The process could, however, proceed only with approval from the Governing Council, and links with the subsidiary bodies had yet to be defined, although there appeared to be agreement that it should be an independent body that would complement and strengthen existing bodies. Mr. King urged civil society representatives to lobby strongly for inclusion in discussion on the platform and the way in which it was to be formulated and, in the interests of equitable participation, open access and transparency, to lobby for the resources needed

to enable full civil society involvement. He added that the platform was intended to address failings in the science-policy interface, and the many multilateral environmental agreements needed a common baseline to increase the synergies between them.

68. Another representative, commenting on the importance of scientific input into policymaking, said that the reality was that many resources were exploited by external agents for use elsewhere, and widespread corruption and political profiteering were major obstacles to good governance. Mr. Lonsdale responded that improved environmental governance and access to data would make it difficult for institutional failings to be hidden and harder for corruption around natural resources to persist. Knowledge without governance was inadequate. Mr. Franklin drew attention to the work of Transparency International, saying that countries should demonstrate their commitment to fighting corruption and to biodiversity conservation in order to gain access to bilateral and multilateral funding. Mr. King added that the Consortium for the Barcode of Life, an international initiative devoted to developing DNA barcoding as a global standard for the identification of biological species, offered a promising means of tracking the international movement of biological species.

69. One representative sought guidance on the issues that major groups and stakeholders ought to be pushing during the special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum. Mr. Franklin suggested REDD-plus, particularly from the perspective of identifying incentives for business involvement; support for regional business coalitions, especially in developing countries; and building a market for ecosystem services sufficient for business to view biodiversity protection as a worthwhile investment.

VII. Session 5: Towards a world summit on sustainable development (“Rio + 20”) in 2012

70. The objective of the session was to discuss matters relevant to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (“Rio + 20”) scheduled to take place in Brazil in 2012. Keynote presentations were made by Mr. Scanlon and Mr. Felix Dodds, Executive Director, Stakeholder Forum for a Sustainable Future, followed by a Forum discussion. The session was chaired by Ms. Cecilia Iglesias, Asociación Civil Red Ambiental.

A. Keynote presentations

71. Mr. Scanlon said that the year of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, 2012, would mark the twentieth anniversary of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and the tenth anniversary of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2002. The decision to hold the 2012 conference had been taken in 2009 by the General Assembly in its resolution 64/236 of 24 December 2009. The objective of the conference would be to secure renewed political commitment for sustainable development, assessing progress to date and addressing new and emerging challenges. The conference would focus, among other issues, on a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and on the institutional framework for sustainable development. The period preceding it would be critical for all interested parties, including major groups and stakeholders, to engage in advocacy to influence the political process that would ultimately set the conference’s agenda. The issues of what was meant by sustainable development, what was the best institutional architecture to address it and what the green economy meant in that context would be played out in Brazil, and fresh thinking was essential.

72. Regarding the process, he said that a preparatory committee would be established within the framework of the Commission on Sustainable Development. The General Assembly had called for the active participation of all relevant stakeholders in the preparatory process and had invited ideas and proposals reflecting experiences and lessons learned. UNEP was keen to take up that invitation and was undertaking relevant activities; for example, the first intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder consultation on the fifth Global Environment Outlook report would take place in March 2010, and the report would focus on the green economy. In addition, a major draft decision on international environmental governance was before the eleventh special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum. UNEP wished to be actively involved in the lead-up to the conference and it was important for civil society to be engaged in it as well.

73. Mr. Dodds gave an overview of the many global problems that rendered the conference necessary, and then summarized the process by which it had evolved, beginning with a statement by the representative of Brazil to the General Assembly in September 2007 calling for an event to tackle the critical issues facing the planet. He also outlined a number of potential outcomes or consequences of the conference, including a substantive move towards a new economy; an enhanced environment pillar, possibly reflected institutionally in the setting up of a world environmental organization; a revised and strengthened sustainable development agenda in the United Nations; an improved understanding of how to implement environmental policy; a new local Agenda 21 process for sustainable development at the community level; reflection of the green economy in legislation, reorganization of financial institutions, corporate accountability, greater public participation, and establishment of a global database on good practice; and renewed national commitment, for example, through a rebuilding of national councils for sustainable development.

B. Discussion

74. In the ensuing discussion, there was general agreement on the need to grasp an opportunity that might not occur again for some time. Several representatives said that it was important that the lead-up to the conference involve not just ministries and organizations with an environment portfolio, but a wide range of other agencies to ensure that a new governance mechanism was as inclusive as possible. In that regard, major groups and stakeholders organizations should be accorded more formal participation in the international process of decision-making in sustainable development, especially as the enormous strength of those groups was not being fully used, and a potential funding source for UNEP remained unrealized. Mr. Scanlon agreed that the conference was not just a conference on the environment – its theme was sustainable development, of which the environment was a part, and it was necessary to bear that in mind to attract a full spectrum of participation. From a UNEP perspective, resolving the issue of the degree of civil society involvement was more a matter for member States than for the secretariat.

75. There was also some deliberation on the relevance to the conference of items that had already been adopted at previous conferences. One representative highlighted the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation as an example of a previous output that continued to have value and could inform discussions at the conference; there was no need to reinvent the wheel. Mr. Scanlon observed that the General Assembly resolution instigating the conference took that into account, as it mentioned a review of previous summits among the conference objectives.

76. Regarding the possible outcomes listed by Mr. Dodds, one representative said that they would benefit from being grouped thematically and could form a useful framework to bear in mind when refining the concept of the green economy and what it meant. One representative said that in promoting the green economy it was important to be honest about growth. If one took into account external costs, particularly the depletion of natural resources, growth over the previous century had been negative. Several representatives stressed the value of education in promoting the environment, and the relevance of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005–2014) was mentioned.

77. One representative asked how, given the Executive Director's comments on the late coordination of civil society efforts preceding the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, civil society could ensure that it built momentum in a timely fashion in the lead-up to the Conference on Sustainable Development. Mr. Dodds said that he felt that much of the civil society activity preceding the Copenhagen conference had been effective, but that many of those involved were unsure of their roles, which hindered genuine engagement. The sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties, to be held in Cancún, Mexico, in November and December 2010, offered another opportunity for major groups and stakeholders to see how it could be more effectively engaged. He added that the Copenhagen conference had not offered any winnable objectives for civil society; the Conference on Sustainable Development differed in that respect. In the coming five years there were two major focal points – the Conference on Sustainable Development and the Millennium Development Goal benchmark of 2015 – and it was necessary to find linkages between them.

78. With regard to the organizational structure of the Conference on Sustainable Development, one representative said that it would be useful to know what model would be adopted – an autonomous secretariat or one from within the United Nations – as that would determine many of the procedural elements, including how major groups and stakeholders were engaged or consulted. Mr. Scanlon said that the General Assembly had left that matter open and it was up to the Secretary-General to decide how to move forward. Mr. Dodds said that large international organizations such as the World Bank

would be involved in the conference, and that it might be preferable to have an independent secretariat that would be better placed to draw on the strengths of agencies outside the United Nations system.

VIII. Refining the key messages to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum

79. During the session, which was chaired by Mr. Jan-Gustav Strandenaes, Senior Policy Adviser, Northern Alliance for Sustainability (ANPED), a number of participants made brief presentations on key messages that they wished to deliver to the ministers and participants at the forthcoming session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum. Presentations were made by the following major groups: indigenous peoples; women; farmers; children and young people; local authorities; non-governmental organizations; workers and trade unions; and business and industry organizations. In addition, presentations were made on key messages from the regional groups and common messages emerging from the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum. The messages were circulated in document UNEP/GCSS.XI/INF/5.⁴

80. The representative speaking on behalf of indigenous peoples said that, as the life of indigenous people depended strongly on nature, they suffered more than most from environmental degradation and climate change, and it was vital that they should be included in any discussion on international environmental governance and other issues of relevance to their way of life. The traditional knowledge and expertise of indigenous peoples should be accorded greater recognition in the management of biodiversity and ecosystems. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples formed a basis for fruitful and mutually profitable cooperation.

81. The representative speaking on behalf of women said that women's knowledge, including traditional knowledge, should be protected, documented and retained in the hands of its rightful custodians. Women were particularly vulnerable to a number of threats, including the adverse effects of harmful chemicals, discrimination and poor working conditions. Non-chemical alternatives should be available for women in their work and daily lives, and life-cycle approaches should be adopted in chemicals management and product design. The Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions should be provided with additional funding to facilitate their work.

82. The representative speaking on behalf of farmers stressed the importance of farming for society and noted that farmers were the largest group of ecosystem managers and so were at the heart of the green economy. It was crucial that farmers, as the main users of agrochemicals and thus the most exposed group, should be involved in the synergies process for the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions. Issues requiring urgent consideration to ensure sustainable agriculture that could meet the needs of society and provide economic stability included pricing policies; land tenure rights and ownership; incentives to encourage farmers to produce sustainably; and rewarding farmers for land stewardship that enhanced biodiversity.

83. The representative speaking on behalf of children and young people said that those groups constituted over half the world's population and were taking the initiative in creating change rather than leaving it to others. As the moral stakeholders of the future, children and young people had a right to be involved in discussions on key issues related to the future health of the planet, including sustainable development, the green economy, protection of biodiversity and the lingering damage caused by hazardous chemicals. She delivered the strong message that children and young people were ready to take the lead in building an era of sustainability, and expected others to follow. The voting power of the young generation would soon sideline and replace leaders who neglected their responsibility to move beyond self-interest and do what was best for the common good.

84. The representative speaking on behalf of local authorities said that, by definition, the United Nations focused on country entities, but megacities such as Mumbai, India, had populations larger than that of many countries, and humanity was living on an increasingly urban planet. Global sustainability was therefore heavily dependent on how cities performed, and how they faced such challenges as wasteful lifestyles, pollution, civil unrest and infrastructure provision. The United Nations, in particular UNEP and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, should

⁴ www.unep.org/civil-society/GlobalMajorGroupsStakeholdersForum/GMGSF11/tabid/2910/language/en-US/Default.aspx

make greater efforts to engage with cities and local governments on such issues, for example, through a new sustainable cities initiative.

85. The representative speaking on behalf of non-governmental organizations recognized the importance of promoting synergies between the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions but said that there should be much greater involvement of civil society in the implementation phase, with more funds made available to facilitate participation. The core of knowledge and expertise residing in non-governmental organizations was particularly valuable to multilateral environmental agreements and the debate on the green economy, among other things, and institutional arrangements should be put in place to formalize the engagement of civil society in relevant forums.

86. The representative speaking on behalf of workers and trade unions said that the multiple crises that the world was facing had common origins in a socially unjust, environmentally unsustainable and economically inefficient model incapable of providing decent work and decent lives to millions of people. Transition to a more just and equitable system required the promotion of green and decent jobs, greening the economy and ensuring respect, democracy and transparency in the workplace. There was also a need to build, strengthen and comply with international regulations that put people and the planet first, including through avoidance of what might be termed the “lowest common denominator” effect in chemicals management.

87. The representative speaking on behalf of business and industry organizations said that, while there had been a variety of long-standing interactions between UNEP and the business community, the interface between those two actors could be further improved and strengthened. The private sector had vital contributions to make in strengthening the scientific base of UNEP, reinforcing international institutions and processes, and pursuing implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building. Business and ecosystems were inextricably linked, and business was increasingly recognizing the economic and social benefits of acting according to the principles of sustainable development. Further measures should be taken to provide the private sector with the necessary stimulus and incentives to engage in the green economy.

88. The representative delivering the global agreement on regional key messages said that there was general concern among major groups and stakeholders organizations from all regions about the inadequate frameworks that imposed barriers – such as lack of funding, insufficient capacity-building and untimely access to meeting documents – to the active involvement of civil society in processes of crucial importance to the planet. Of deep concern was the diminishing support for regional consultation meetings. To enhance partnership opportunities, UNEP should appoint a person in each regional office fully dedicated to liaison with the major groups and stakeholders in order to improve access to the experience, efforts, thinking and analytic capacities of those groups. Regional major groups and stakeholders organizations also strongly urged the creation of a major groups and stakeholders consultative panel, with balanced regional representation, to work closely with the consultative group of ministers or high-level representatives on international environmental governance.

89. The representative delivering the commonalities message from the major groups and stakeholders to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum summarized their main messages on environment in the multilateral system, Rio + 20, the green economy, biodiversity and ecosystems and synergies between the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions. In all instances the benefits that could arise from further involvement of major groups and stakeholders were highlighted.

90. Ms. Ivanova expressed the frustration felt by many major groups and stakeholders at their limited involvement in the official preparatory processes for Rio + 20. She presented the text of a formal statement that she had prepared to assist civil society organizations in conveying to Government representatives their desire for further involvement. The text was approved unanimously by the Forum.

IX. Other matters

91. Mr. Strandenaes paid tribute to the work of Mr. Olivier Deleuze in promoting the cause of civil society. The tribute was received by the Forum with acclamation. In conclusion, Mr. Strandenaes urged civil society and all stakeholders to help to make the present century better than the one left behind.

92. Evaluation forms were distributed to participants to gather their views on the meeting.

X. Closure of the Forum

93. The Chair concluded the Forum by stressing the need to achieve common understanding on how to use messages, expressing the hope that major groups and stakeholders could become more active during the current crucial period for environmental advocacy.

94. The eleventh Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum was declared closed at 5.10 p.m. on Monday, 22 February 2010.
