



Distr.: General  
19 February 2011

English only



## Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme

---

Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum  
Twelfth session  
Nairobi, 19 and 20 February 2011

### Report of the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum on the work of its twelfth session

#### I. Opening session

1. The twelfth session of the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum (formerly known as the Global Civil Society Forum)<sup>1</sup> was held at the headquarters of the United Nations Environment Programme in Nairobi, on 19 and 20 February 2011. The Forum was opened at 9.20 a.m. on Saturday, 19 February 2011, by Mr. Alexander Juras, Chief, Major Groups and Stakeholders Branch of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Division of Regional Cooperation.
2. Opening statements were made by Ms. Mildred Mkandla, External Relations Director of EarthCare Africa Policy Monitoring Institute, and co-chair of the women's major group; Ms. Sascha Gabizon, Executive Director of Women in Europe for a Common Future, co-chair of the women's major group and chair of the Major Groups Facilitating Committee; and Ms. Tomoko Nishimoto, Director, UNEP Division of Regional Cooperation.
3. In her opening statement, Ms. Mkandla welcomed the continuation by UNEP of the tradition of dialogue between major groups and stakeholders on crucial environmental issues in preparation for the sessions of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum. The current session of the forum afforded an opportunity for members of civil society to come together to consult and exchange views on environmental issues. It was particularly relevant that the discussions on the environment were taking place in Africa, where they were of greatest importance.
4. Ms. Gabizon, in her opening statement, welcomed the opportunity provided by UNEP for major groups and stakeholders to come together to contribute to discussions feeding into the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2012. She introduced the nine major groups represented in the forum, explaining that they were also represented in a major groups and stakeholders advisory group set up to discuss international environmental governance. As the discussions at the current session would contribute to the significant content that UNEP was providing for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, she urged the representatives to make full use of the opportunity to share their views.
5. In her opening statement, Ms. Nishimoto welcomed the representatives on behalf of the Executive Director of UNEP and expressed appreciation for civil society's valuable input into UNEP work. At its twenty-sixth session, the Governing Council would tackle the two key issues in the work of UNEP in recent years: international environmental governance and the green economy. Those themes would also be at the heart of the discussions at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. In its focus on international environmental governance, UNEP was seeking a catalytic rather than a prescriptive role in the search for both incremental changes and broader reform, and

---

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

aimed to promote dialogue between member States that included major groups and stakeholders. The debate on international environmental governance was maturing and focusing on the various options for changing the status quo and the implications thereof.

6. Turning to the green economy, she drew attention to the UNEP report entitled “Towards a Green Economy”, which was to be launched on the first day of the Governing Council session. The report was intended to pave the way for a comprehensive and flexible approach to the green economy that was applicable worldwide. She stressed that UNEP was committed to working with civil society to ensure that the views of all constituencies were brought to the attention of world policymakers, and urged the representatives to be bold yet realistic and to present their views in a practical way.

7. Ms. Gillian Martin Mehers of Bright Green Learning and facilitator of the discussions outlined the key elements of the session.

## **II. Organization of work**

### **A. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work**

8. The Forum representatives adopted the provisional agenda for the session without amendment.

### **B. Attendance**

9. The Forum was attended by 119 representatives of 76 major groups and stakeholders organizations from the following countries: Afghanistan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Burundi, Canada, Denmark, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Latvia, Lebanon, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Philippines, Qatar, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Togo, Turkey, Uganda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Zimbabwe.

10. The full list of participants has been made available at [www.unep.org/civil-society/GlobalMajorGroupsStakeholdersForum/GMGFSF12/tabid/5461/Default.aspx](http://www.unep.org/civil-society/GlobalMajorGroupsStakeholdersForum/GMGFSF12/tabid/5461/Default.aspx).

## **III. Session 1: International environmental governance**

11. Presentations were given by Ms. Heli Sirve, Ambassador of Finland to Kenya, representing Ms. Paula Lehtomaki, Minister of Environment of Finland, and co-chair of the Consultative Group of Ministers or High-Level Representatives on International Environment Governance; Ms. Margaret Kamar, Assistant Minister for Environment and Mineral Resources of Kenya and Mr. Ali D. Mohamed, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Mineral Resources of Kenya, both representing Mr. John Njoroge Michuki, Minister of Environment and Mineral Resources of Kenya and co-chair of the Consultative Group; Mr. Negusu Aklilu and Mr. Arthur Dahl, presenting the work of the major groups and stakeholders advisory group on international environmental governance; and Mr. Bradnee Chambers, Senior Legal Officer and Chief of Policy and Interlinkages between the Multilateral Environmental Agreements, Division of Environmental Law and Conventions, UNEP. The presentations were followed by a discussion of the issues raised.<sup>2</sup>

12. Ms. Sirve emphasized that the current international environmental governance system was recognized as weak, fragmented and underperforming. Nevertheless, the international community had shown its willingness and ability to deal with environmental issues in the negotiations on biodiversity and climate change that took place during 2010. She expressed the hope that the product of the Consultative Group of Ministers or High-Level Representatives on International Environmental Governance, known as the Nairobi-Helsinki Outcome (UNEP/GC.26/18), would be endorsed by the Governing Council and feed into the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. It was important to fit the proposals on international environmental governance into the wider framework of sustainable development. The role of the major groups was crucial as ambitious objectives could not be achieved without a broad-based and transparent approach.

13. The major groups had been actively participating in the various phases of the international environmental governance process, including the consultations on international environmental governance that had taken place in Geneva in October 2010 and the teleconference between the Executive Director of UNEP and major group representatives prior to the second meeting of the Consultative Group, in Helsinki, in November 2010. The dialogue between Governments and major groups would intensify ahead of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and the

---

<sup>2</sup> The presentations, as they were given, and if available, are to be found on following website: [www.unep.org/civil-society/GlobalMajorGroupsStakeholdersForum/GMGFSF12/tabid/5461/Default.aspx](http://www.unep.org/civil-society/GlobalMajorGroupsStakeholdersForum/GMGFSF12/tabid/5461/Default.aspx).

major groups and stakeholders advisory group on international environmental governance would be a useful channel through which to focus the dialogue in a structured and organized way.

14. Ms. Kamar said that the Consultative Group's success was largely a result of the active participation of all stakeholders and that the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum would make an enormous contribution to the international environmental governance reform process. As co-sponsor of the draft decision on international environmental governance at the twenty-sixth session of the Governing Council, the Government of Kenya was satisfied with the progress in the discussions on international environmental governance reform but felt that it was important to build on the political momentum achieved to date so as to justify the considerable time and resources invested in the process by all stakeholders. The contribution of UNEP and the Consultative Group would be vital for the successful outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

15. Mr. Mohamed endorsed those remarks, noting that the fragmentation of environmental policy had seriously hampered development in Kenya over the past 40 years. The requirements placed on Governments and parties to the various environmental conventions had limited the development of African countries. It was in the interests of developing countries to achieve better coordination of environmental governance and it was hoped that the countries assembled at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development would endorse the outcomes of the Consultative Group's work.

16. Mr. Dahl outlined the role and work of the major groups and stakeholders advisory group on international environmental governance. The group was unique and a new means of channelling information from the major groups and stakeholders to the Governing Council. The group members had been selected from each of the major groups and regions according to their expertise. Their aim was not to achieve consensus but rather to present various sides of the issues and to channel creative and new ways of thinking. The group had looked at key ways in which civil society could contribute to the international environmental governance process through such means as scientific advice; participation in accountability mechanisms; involvement in decision-making by participating in international delegations; and through legal remedies and dispute resolution mechanisms. The group had flagged a number of areas with ethical and moral dimension and was a voice for fundamental values and concerns not necessarily considered by Governments.

17. Mr. Aklilu focused on why international environmental governance and its potential outcomes were of interest to developing countries. The environmental challenge was all-embracing but developing countries remained very much on the periphery in addressing it. A global environmental governance system was needed that would respond to the specific challenges of developing countries, especially as the economic development model of developed countries was not relevant to them. A different model was needed with environmental governance at the national level as its main pillar and taking account of efforts to reduce poverty. New and reliable financial and technical support was required to achieve that new model.

18. Mr. Chambers discussed what he said was the importance of international environmental governance for developing countries from a systemic viewpoint and what could be expected from the Governing Council. While there was no shortage of multilateral environmental agreements and internationally agreed environmental goals, developing countries lacked the means to implement them and required capacity-building. The Global Environment Facility was available mostly for project funding and although UNEP played a role in capacity-building it lacked the means to implement national strategies. There was no United Nations system-wide strategy and agencies needed to consider how to work together to resolve the lack of coherence. Capacity-building was so important for developing countries that it should be considered in whatever reform process was adopted. Developing countries' lack of resources hampered their ability to take part in discussions on many issues and there was a danger of those countries becoming disenfranchised.

19. The Nairobi-Helsinki Outcome presented strategies but an anchor institution was needed for accountability and to implement them. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development was the most fitting political level at which a decision on such an institution could be taken. The Governing Council session would be an important step forward in endorsing the Nairobi-Helsinki Outcome. It was important to maintain the political momentum and ensure that UNEP was part of the negotiations at the Conference.

## **Discussion**

20. Following the panel presentations a broad-ranging discussion took place, with the panellists responding to a number of the issues raised.

## **1. Role of global major groups and stakeholders**

21. The role of major groups and stakeholders in the international environmental governance process was keenly discussed. Several representatives said that, while many decision makers spoke of the need to involve civil society in the negotiations, in reality that was often not the case. One drew attention, by way of example, to the lack of involvement of civil society in the meetings of the Consultative Group in July and November 2010. Another expressed the advisory group's concerns on the matter, calling for more innovative ways to be found of involving civil society in discussions. There was a need for more coherence within the United Nations system in engaging civil society; inspiring models existed, for example within the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. A third representative asked representatives of Governments on the panel whether they would be promoting a more democratic approach to environmental governance in major international forums. One representative said that the modalities for civil society participation should be clearly defined in any Governing Council decision on international environmental governance.

22. Mr. Dahl, responding to the issues raised, said that a strong civil society voice was necessary to stimulate government action, and ensuring that civil society's voice was heard was a priority of the advisory group. Ms. Kamar said that one of the outcomes of the meeting of the Consultative Group in Helsinki in November 2010 was recognition of the need for the involvement of all stakeholders, including civil society, and that involvement would be increased in the future. Ms. Sirve added that the lack of civil society involvement in the Helsinki meeting was a result of the mandate of that meeting, and the Consultative Group had sought to facilitate comments the best it could. On the issue of promoting the democratic process in international forums, Ms. Kamar said that Kenya, as a member of the Group of 77, would pursue that aim. Ms. Sirve said that the member States of the European Union were supportive of democratic governance processes, although engaging civil society in United Nations system activities was more complex, and more work was needed on the formalities of the matter.

## **2. International environmental governance reform**

23. There was some discussion of the issue of incremental versus broader reform in international environmental governance. Some representatives said that the lack of momentum in the reform process argued in favour of immediate engagement in higher-priority incremental changes rather than awaiting broader reform. One highlighted the dilemma that modest reforms could be viewed as tinkering around at the edges, but aiming only for reform of the entire environmental governance system might mean that modest reforms did not go forward at all. Another called for the adoption of a more holistic approach to the matter, whereby the main levers of change and the required outcomes were identified, and incremental changes made a significant contribution to the overall process of systemic structural reform.

24. Regarding the profile of international environmental governance, one representative said that a lack of resources resulting from a lack of interest in the environment posed a major obstacle. More effort should be made to raise awareness and to gain access to innovative sources of funding, including emerging agencies, the private sector and non-governmental organizations, which were playing an increasingly significant role in the area of environmental governance. He said that the Scientific Committee of the International Human Dimensions Programme on Global Environmental Change had been encouraging dialogue on the matter. Another representative agreed that innovative funding methods were required, mentioning financial transaction taxes as an example. Binding legislation was needed to support such measures as the establishment of clean-up funds for mining activities.

25. Another representative stressed the importance of relevance. A higher profile for the environment was only one of multiple issues confronting the planet: poverty, lack of nutrition and limited access to resources were also of great significance. It was therefore important to avoid making the environment the domain of scientists and to ensure that people were brought into the discourse and were made aware of the role that the environment played in their daily lives. There was a danger that environmental change could outpace knowledge transmission at the community level, leading to a huge knowledge gap, unless a way could be found to make the environment relevant to ordinary people.

26. Mr. Chambers, in his response, observed that while a philosophy of incrementalism was built into the system it was essentially self-limiting; it was necessary to look at the entire system and identify where broad reforms could take place. Responding to the point on the role of the scientific community, he agreed that its approach had often been overly academic and said that greater focus should be placed on reaching the policy community.

### 3. Institutional reform, including the role of the United Nations Environment Programme

27. There was considerable discussion of options for institutional reform to facilitate improved international environmental governance, and the role of UNEP within that reform process. Several said that it was important to maintain the position of UNEP as an environmental body based in a developing country. One representative said that UNEP should take over all elements of international agreements related to environmental issues, including goal 7 of the Millennium Development Goals, and that principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development should be much more prominent on the international environmental agenda. Another said that care needed to be taken in raising the profile of UNEP, as it could trigger resistance from other agencies.

28. There was some discussion regarding the relative strength of UNEP and its capacity to adopt a greater leadership role in global environmental issues. One representative said that UNEP appeared weak only because of the environment being a weak topic at the national level. He added that financing for the environment was available, if properly mustered, and that UNEP should influence that flow without appearing to be self-interested. Several representatives suggested models for restructuring UNEP so that it could operate in a more efficient and cost-effective manner.

29. Some representatives spoke in favour of making UNEP a specialized agency of the United Nations so as to strengthen it. One warned that if UNEP became a specialized agency universal membership and finance would be contentious issues. She said that the mandate of UNEP gave it the authority to be the prime mover on the environment, although it did not have a strong reputation for delivering results compared say to other programmes such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Another representative said that the UNDP model was becoming outdated as traditional aid waned as a source of funding. A third said that the presence of United Nations agencies at the country level, including UNDP, too often proved an obstacle to the financing and development of local institutions.

30. With regard to the current institutional framework, some representatives said that there were already sufficient environmental agreements and policies in place; what was lacking was implementation. Others said that emerging challenges required the development of new, strong institutions and agreements, with democracy at the centre of the process.

31. Ms. Kamar, in her response, said that the idea of enhancing UNEP had merit and that it was important to have an environmental agency based in the developing world. She also saw value in the establishment of a new umbrella body in the form of a specialized agency. She acknowledged the problem of funding for UNEP, which stood at one fifth that of the World Food Programme. With regard to the effectiveness of UNEP, she questioned how it was possible to measure such effectiveness if the programme's mandate did not go hand in hand with strong financial support. Major groups and stakeholders could make a major input into the debate on the role of UNEP. Ms. Sirve drew attention to the draft decision before the Governing Council requesting the Executive Director of UNEP to call upon the Consultative Group to explore further the possibilities for institutional reform.

32. Mr. Chambers said that whatever institutional option was chosen it was important to identify what that option had at its core. One element currently lacking was authority, as was the case with UNEP, its mandate notwithstanding. The Governing Council was supposed to set the global environmental agenda, but that was difficult with a body of only 58 member States, far less than the membership of the conferences to the parties to most multilateral environmental agreements. The lack of financial resources for UNEP further undermined that authority. Finding a solution to that problem was central to the issue of developing an institutional model for international environmental governance.

### 4. United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

33. The representatives paid some attention to the relevance of the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. Several representatives stressed the importance of developing a coherent approach during that process, although it was unclear how the voice of civil society would be heard. One said that civil society should take advantage of the Conference to propose major reform and not simply incremental reform. Another said that assuming that any package of proposed reform measures adopted by the Governing Council should feed directly into the Conference, rather than pass through some intermediary party.

34. Some representatives pointed out the relevance of the three pillars of sustainable development: economic development, social development and environmental protection. One said that a strategy needed to be developed to link a stronger environmental pillar with the economic and social pillars, and said that ISO 26000, providing guidelines on social responsibility, was a useful tool in that regard.

35. Mr. Chambers said that, were a draft decision on international environmental governance to be put forward to the Conference, it must be made clear that that draft decision did not threaten the sustainable development agenda, which had similar problems to those besetting the international environmental governance agenda with regard to accountability, review, coordination and lack of authority. He agreed that the Conference was the best forum for a decision on international environmental governance.

## 5. Green economy

36. Another major theme during the discussion was the relevance of the green economy to international environmental governance reform. One representative said that the green economy had the potential to be a vital tool to connect the environmental pillar with the other pillars. Another said that UNEP could assist in clarifying that matter. A third said that a number of commonalities linked the green economy with international environmental governance, including environmental justice, natural resource accounting, environmental impact assessment and safeguard policies, and that the linkages between the two merited further investigation.

37. One representative said that international environmental governance should, among other things, facilitate international solidarity on such issues as conserving common goods and reducing the use of fossil fuels to counteract global warming. In that regard, he drew attention to the decision of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to allow oil exploration in the Virunga National Park, home of endangered mountain gorillas, and called upon the representatives to support efforts to oppose that development.

38. Mr. Chambers responded that UNEP had not done enough to explore the linkages between the green economy and international environmental governance. The concept of the green economy meant different things to different countries, with some expressing concern that it might give rise to a regulatory framework incorporating trade barriers. Further dialogue was needed on the matter.

## 6. Accountability

39. The representatives discussed the issue of accountability. One said that, while the need for them was recognized, there was little discussion of the type of compliance or enforcement mechanism that would support transparency and accountability; the subject did not feature in the Nairobi/Helsinki Outcome. There was also no mechanism to ensure that the voice of civil society was heard on the issue of accountability. One representative drew attention to the capacity constraints faced by developing countries in implementation, compliance and enforcement, for example, with regard to drafting environmental legislation and transposing international agreements into domestic law.

40. Responding, Mr. Chambers said there was a need for a review and accountability system within the environmental regime. Other international regimes had such systems, including the World Trade Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and the environmental regime needed a similar procedure to help countries meet their obligations and commitments, supported by capacity-building and technology transfer. The UNEP programme of work included a concept of how that might operate through a self-reporting system by which countries would review their success in implementing a cluster of multilateral environmental agreements. Each country would report back to the Governing Council every few years, facilitating the process of identifying and bridging gaps in implementation. Pursuing such a soft approach might be more successful than seeking to adopt a hard approach to compliance, given that the latter was not built into the original structure of most multilateral environmental agreements. The obligations under those agreements were generally limited to reporting and monitoring, and most countries upheld those commitments. In any event, it was more important at the national level to focus on implementation than on compliance, although several countries preferred not to be subjected to review on that criterion. He proposed an environmental desk in each country, supported by regional hubs, to facilitate work with national environmental officers, even though such a system would stretch resources.

41. Mr. Dahl noted that the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) had a system of peer review of national performance that could be employed as a model for developing countries of a soft mechanism that could be applied to review of the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements.

42. Mr. Aklilu said that a soft approach might prove insufficient. While most conventions required reporting, that provided little incentive for implementation. There were, however, a number of performance reviews available, both national and independent, that offered insight into how successfully countries were implementing multilateral environmental agreements.

## 7. Further statements

43. Following the discussion, Ms. Norine Kennedy, a member of the Major Groups Facilitating Committee, noted that stakeholder involvement had been an important element of previous major summit meetings and expressed the hope that the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development would take it to a higher level. The role of UNEP in the adoption of innovative approaches and the involvement of stakeholders had been instrumental in ensuring a civil society voice in those processes, but more was needed in the way of mainstreaming and substantive engagement by governments. The dialogue on international environmental governance should recognize diversity and take advantage of the wealth of knowledge held by critical stakeholders. She stressed the connection between international environmental governance and sustainable development, and said that the involvement of major groups and stakeholders was indispensable in carrying forward the agenda in both areas.

44. Ms. Sara Svensson, Major Groups Facilitating Committee, remarked that even though the issue of international environmental governance could be overwhelming and difficult for young people they nonetheless had a role to play in shaping the agenda. Global solutions were needed to global environmental crises, supported by systemic structural change, leadership and a culture of collaboration. She urged the representatives to ensure that delegates to the Governing Council session were well aware of the stance of civil society and to ensure that they reported back to their own countries on the outcomes of the meetings.

## IV. Session 2: Green economy

45. A keynote presentation by Mr. Steven Stone, Chief, Economics and Trade Branch, UNEP Division of Technology, Industry and Economics, was followed by brief presentations from panellists: Mr. Mark Halle, Director, Trade and Investment, and European Representative, International Institute for Sustainable Development; Ms. Martina Bianchini, Vice-President, Dow Chemical Company and Chair of the International Chamber of Commerce Green Economy Task Force; Ms. Anabella Rosemberg, Policy Officer on Occupational Health and Safety and Environment, International Trade Union Confederation; Ms. Lorna Omuodo, Vanilla Development Foundation, Kenya; and Mr. Talaipek Makeev, Executive Director, Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia.

### A. Keynote presentation

46. Drawing attention to the forthcoming launch of the UNEP report on the green economy, Mr. Stone said that although the concept of the green economy was nothing new the context had changed as a result of a reconsideration of the benchmarks of economic performance following the crises associated with food and fuel prices and the global economic downturn. Outlining the history of UNEP work on the green economy from its launch in 2008, focusing on growth, jobs and poverty reduction in the context of delivering human well-being and social equity without compromising the environment, he said that the new report examined economic sectors with the greatest impact on jobs and the environment, such as renewable energy, waste disposal, forestry and agriculture. He cited the example of fisheries, where massive subsidies were driving the extraction of increasing numbers of fish and leading to the decline and collapse of stocks. Referring to the links between poverty reduction and employment, he said that the drawdown in natural resources over time had had the greatest effect on the poor. In contrast, he said, investment yielded good returns in respect of social welfare; even a small increase in productivity, for example in agriculture, had a significant impact.

47. Citing research by UNEP and the International Labour Organization in 2008, which had shown the potential of the biofuel, wind and solar power industries for job creation, he said that jobs in some areas would be lost with the creation of jobs in others, meaning that the challenge lay in managing the transition to a green economy. In conclusion, he suggested five areas for further research: the risks of moving to a green economy; the problems inherent in not doing so; transition management; the role of the private sector; and the part to be played by the international community, particularly in the run-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

### B. Presentations by panellists

48. Mr. Halle said that the green economy initiative was one of the most exciting developments of recent decades and an effective answer to the traditional criticism that UNEP had little power to affect global issues. His organization was particularly interested in enabling conditions for the transition to a green economy. Such an economy offered the best way to confront the current combined economic and ecological crisis, as it constituted a more positive force for attaining broader public policy goals than did the approaches of the past; ideally in the green economy every unit of growth generated

progress and employment while also providing solutions to existing environmental problems. He recalled, however, the resistance that such a new concept encountered, given the lack of understanding of its workings and implications in terms of building equity and closing the gap between rich and poor. He stressed the need to focus on enabling conditions, changing the current incentives and disincentives such as subsidies, monopolies and domestic policies and speeding up the pace of development of new technologies such as in clean energy. In conclusion, he called for reform of international environmental governance to ensure that the system was optimally placed to drive the transition to a green economy.

49. Ms. Bianchini expressed the view that the private sector was indispensable to the transition towards a resource-efficient green economy. She stressed the many market-level changes taking place, citing developments in wind-farm technology, and urged the private sector and policymakers to work together to effect the necessary policy adjustments to speed up the transition. The private sector was driving the changes, she said, commenting that the term “green economy” was a policy term not much used by the business community, but that the concept itself was alive and defined the future. She stressed, however, that there was no single green economy, but rather numerous manifestations of the idea at various levels. She expressed the view that the major challenge was to understand the scope of the green economy, with its potential and risks. Although agreeing with the UNEP definition of the concept, and that used by OECD for its green growth initiative, she said that a definition from the business perspective was required that took into account the obligation to deliver economically; it was critical to reconcile the short-term requirement to satisfy shareholders with the long-term goals of meeting the needs of stakeholders and society.

50. Ms. Roseberg commended UNEP on the green economy initiative, especially the linking of employment to environmental issues. She said that for the interests that she represented the green economy related primarily to employment, including matters such as occupational health, the informal sector, transformation of existing jobs, job security and empowerment of workers. She also commented on the role of Governments in social housing and called for a more equitable taxation structure through, for example, indirect taxes on purchases; for increased social protection, in the form of unemployment benefits, access to health care and education and compensation for those losing jobs in de-industrializing areas. She also wished to see greater consideration of the geographical variations between areas, such as emerging cities versus rural areas and for a renewed effort towards ensuring public participation and building social consensus. In conclusion, she said that the green economy was a move in the right direction but should be part of a longer-term path to radical change in production and consumption patterns since the current economic and social model was not delivering.

51. Ms. Omuodo stressed the importance of managing a transition to the green economy. Ways to do so included developing a set of common indicators on critical local development issues, improving skills, reducing poverty, fostering entrepreneurship, supporting innovation and promoting social inclusion. The indicators of a local transition to a green economy included the development of green industries, new products and technologies. The green economy was intended to foster job creation and economic development in new areas of growth and sustainability. Stressing the importance of leveraging training and skills and relating them to the labour market and assessing how policy development could strengthen local infrastructure for technology transfer, especially to new and small enterprises, she described entrepreneurship as a key driver of economic growth. She illustrated her point referring to case studies of green start-ups in Kenya, particularly focusing on clean fuels and adapted stoves and the potential of such initiatives for the local economy. In conclusion, she outlined some of the policy interventions needed in Kenya to support those initiatives.

52. Mr. Makeev, in reference to Central Asia, said that at the national level the green economy was not a true priority, since countries were focused on efforts to attain the Millennium Development Goals. He expressed support for the integration of the two, as the green economy could be a way towards the implementation of the goals. Stressing that long-term political stability, economic resilience and social inclusiveness were key prerequisites for the successful introduction of a green economy, he said that dictatorial Governments and widespread corruption posed a challenge for some developing countries, citing the specific circumstances of Central Asian countries; in Kyrgyzstan revolutions had resulted in major power redistributions and the limiting of investment and economic growth; and in others long-term dictatorships meant that countries had scant experience of market economies and were uncertain where political power would eventually lie. There was inertia in the commercial sector with the prevailing sentiment favouring business as usual, but experiences in China and India could point the way towards the adoption of green growth in Central Asia.

## C. Discussion

53. In the ensuing discussion, one representative said that although most representatives had agreed in general on the basic model of the green economy set out in the UNEP report, there were other models that should be considered and evaluated. Another pointed out that most African women had little access to the internet or to information and as a result did not understand the green economy concept. They were, however, dependent on small-scale agriculture with few inputs and minimal tillage and so were essentially already practising a green economy. There was therefore, she said, an excellent opportunity for UNEP to become more involved at the grass-roots level. She called for the mainstreaming of sustainable development before the introduction of new terminologies. Referring to the trade imbalances between developing and developed countries, she said that it would be important to ensure democracy and equity for all stakeholders in the introduction of green economy.

54. One representative spoke of the dangers inherent in introducing new concepts and projects that, he said, often came with adverse consequences. Another said that there was a need for an ecological baseline before introducing new ways of doing things, for ways to measure human well-being, for a better understanding of human behaviour and economics and for ways of predicting the characteristics of the new society. A third highlighted the need for cost-benefit analyses and for the integration of green economy developments into ecosystem-based planning.

55. Several representatives said that there was a need for improved governance through enhanced political governance and leadership, for the inclusion of local governments and city administrations in discussions on the green economy concept and for bodies such as Customs unions to promote green initiatives. One representative said that civil society and non-governmental organizations should play dominant roles and work together in promoting the green economy and monitoring cultural changes. Societies, just as the private sector and countries, would choose the most advantageous option available: if it was advantageous to adopt a green economy they would do so. She expressed the view that a comparative study on the relative advantages of the green economy and other economies would be useful but highlighted the importance of the equitable and independent transfer of technology from the North to the South. Another representative called upon all stakeholders to work together.

56. Describing the green economy as an exciting opportunity for agriculture, one representative said that there was considerable concern about the risk of accelerating a business-as-usual approach in the sector, and that a shift from black carbon to green carbon would put great pressure on rural communities. He stressed the need for participatory agricultural systems.

57. Responding to the comments made, one panellist said that it would take time to convince people of the benefits of the green economy and therefore the focus should be on transition measures needed to ensure greater equity and on understanding the delays in implementation.

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

58. A dialogue took place between the Forum representatives and Mr. Achim Steiner, Executive Director of UNEP, who began with an introductory statement on the context of the current sessions of the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum and the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum within the global environmental agenda. He recalled that most of the work of the Governing Council would feed into the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, an event that had the potential to be a milestone in environmental development like the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment and the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. He stressed that at those conferences the representatives had been forward-looking and considered hypothetical scenarios. In 2012, however, the representatives would be faced with the stark reality of the current world and would need to demonstrate clear leadership in order to chart a course for the future.

59. Looking to the green economy, he stressed that UNEP work in that regard sought to neutralize the argument that sustainable development would always come at the expense of economic progress, economic growth and job creation. It also sought to emphasize that the green economy was already sweeping across the world. Accordingly, there was a need for swift action and representatives attending the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development would need to discuss an institutional framework for sustainable development to facilitate the policy changes needed to allow the green economy to spread. He called upon the representatives to give the Governing Council and the world's environment ministers the courage to devise clear messages with a view to feeding into the Conference.

60. In the ensuing discussion, representatives raised a number of issues germane to the Executive Director's statement. One noted that the duration of the Conference was short, spanning only three days. As discussions would have to be tightly focused, that afforded UNEP an opportunity to play a major role and to make specific proposals. He also raised the issue of international environmental governance, asking how the Executive Director saw the process developing.

61. In response, the Executive Director said that the fact that there was little pre-negotiation for the Conference and that it would be a short meeting could work out to be beneficial, as it would mean that Conference participants would be keen to produce a tangible environmental legacy. UNEP had succeeded in putting the green economy at the centre of the international agenda, with the concept being discussed by many bodies, including the General Assembly. Discussions would mature swiftly in the lead-up to the Conference, which should, he suggested, focus on how the international environmental system could retool itself to help countries with support mechanisms if they wished to take a green economic approach in their future development. Discussions should not, however, focus on specific countries and advocate their taking a particular route, as that could prove counter-productive.

62. Looking to international environmental governance, he said that, with the creation of two consultative groups on the subject since the twenty-fifth session of the Governing Council, UNEP had gone back to the basic idea that form should follow function so that in UNEP environment ministers had a more effective platform from which to promote the environmental agenda and ensure that it was not lost in the maelstrom of competing financing and other needs. The work of the consultative groups had led to an overwhelming agreement that the current status quo could not be maintained, with two options for the future: an incremental approach, whereby all the relevant pieces of the jigsaw were refined so as to fit together better and strengthen UNEP in its existing form; or a change that would be more fundamental in nature, whereby the establishment of a world environmental organization was envisaged.

63. It had been suggested that he, as Executive Director, should make a rallying cry to guide the future of the international environmental governance process. He was of the opinion, however, that such a move would prove counter-productive and accord Governments the opportunity to suggest that UNEP was appropriating the process for its own reasons and with its own plans in mind. It was therefore better for Governments to take up the discussions and shape them in the way that they felt was most fitting. In that regard, he had initiated discussions on the subject in other forums, such as at the World Economic Forum, in Davos, Switzerland, to bring the debate to as broad an audience as possible. UNEP would remain a facilitator, catalysing discussion and debate.

64. Another representative called for a more proactive approach to development and the world economy, drawing attention to the damage inflicted on the environment by big businesses. She suggested that new indicators could go a long way to preventing such businesses from continuing and propagating their harmful policies, and that international environmental governance could play a role as a global environmental justice system.

65. In response, the Executive Director said that indicators were important from the perspective of policy management and to monitor how the economy was evolving. It was crucial, however, not to rush their development, as no simple set that would fit all scenarios existed. The focus should instead be on defining mechanisms by which the international community could change its current set-up to assist countries to move forward more swiftly. On the matter of global justice, it was reprehensible that countries could flout their obligations under the international treaties to which they were parties, giving rise to a need for the world to move towards mutual accountability. Although time would be required for such a sea change to take place, it was encouraging that there were already international instruments that were exposing the crimes committed by companies and countries.

66. In response to a question as to why UNEP had not taken the approach of mobilizing private-sector funding for its operations, as had been done by some other United Nations bodies, the Executive Director said that UNEP should not premise its ability to deliver its mandate on the receipt of private-sector funding and could not be tied to individual national or commercial funding interests. At the same time, however, if a country or commercial entity could demonstrate that its work with UNEP would bear significant fruit for the global good, he would be willing to listen and explore proposals for cooperation and collaboration, perhaps through the United Nations Global Compact. UNEP was already engaged with some commercial entities in some areas of its work, such as in the form of sponsorship for its work with young people.

67. In response to the suggestion that the green economy concept was just an idea on paper yet to be translated into reality, especially given the vast swathes of arable land in developing countries that lay fallow, the Executive Director praised the efforts that had already taken place in that

representative's country to develop organic farming. He noted that many people thought that the green economy would be most relevant at the high-technology end of the environmental agenda, when in fact it was most crucial for poor and rural economies. UNEP work on the green economy was extremely relevant to developing countries and would continue to be so.

68. One representative suggested that the multiple crises that had afflicted the world over the past years were symptomatic of a deeper crisis, that of a broken economic and societal system. He suggested that there should be a broader stakeholder dialogue on the various interpretations of the green economy concept. He agreed that the concept was linked to international environmental governance, which was something that should not be talked about solely in abstract terms, but instead in terms of how it would make a difference in practice.

69. In response, the Executive Director said that human well-being was at the heart of the definition of the green economy put forward by UNEP. Such well-being, however, went hand in hand with other forms of development, including economic development. While measuring well-being through the growth of the gross domestic product was crude, there was little or no point in fighting growth, since it was inevitable. Green growth could take place perfectly well as part of a transition to a green economy.

70. One representative, noting that UNEP had not yet opened an office in her country, sought information on the requirements that would have to be met for that to change. In response, the Executive Director said that there were conflicting views on the role of UNEP, with some people suggesting that it should be a more normative institution and others that it should be more responsive to country and regional needs. Given the current structure and financing of UNEP, it was simply impossible for there to be offices in all those countries that had requested them, as such an approach would absorb most of the limited money available with few, or no, tangible benefits for the environment. Accordingly, UNEP was seeking to strengthen its regional offices and was working with UNDP to deliver expertise jointly and to have environmental experts included in United Nations country teams. Unfortunately, the funding made available to UNEP from country contributions had not met initial pledges, as a result of the financial crisis, which posed an additional problem.

71. One representative asked how far cooperation and collaboration extended throughout the United Nations system and whether the idea of financial transaction taxes was something considered in the UNEP green economy report. In response, the Executive Director said that much work took place through the Environment Management Group, which brought together the entire United Nations system. Work was under way, including with the multilateral environmental agreements, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, on issues of collective interest, such as a climate-neutral United Nations and sustainable procurement. On financial transaction taxes, he noted that the UNEP report did not include such recommendations, as it had been felt that it was best to avoid advocating individual tools. Such choices should be left to individual countries, if they felt that that choice was the best way of achieving their goals.

72. One representative called for a systemic and macropolitical shift, as it was crucial for markets and policies to be mutually reinforcing, with suitable enabling conditions in place. Taking up the issue of indicators raised by another representative, she noted that some private-sector companies had launched their own initiatives to move towards a green economy.

73. Another representative said that he had proposed an idea of an environmental guard of honour, given that much environmental destruction around the world was a direct result of warfare. In response, the Executive Director acknowledged that the idea was bold and visionary, but was not, unfortunately, something that UNEP could promote in its current form. UNEP was, however, working in a broader context, across the United Nations system, on various aspects of the environmental footprint of peacekeeping activities. It had developed a partnership with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to green such operations and was also considering the sustainability of the entire military conflict environment.

74. In response to a question as to the relationship between the green growth strategy launched by OECD and the UNEP green economy initiative, he said that the two bodies were working together. OECD would have to begin from a more conservative enabling environment than had UNEP, he suggested, and its approach would be led by ministers of finance, rather than those of environment. He noted that a number of other bodies, such as the World Health Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, were also working on green economy analyses. There was a good chance that not all of them would be aligned, but they would at least provide a rich forum for debate and understanding of the risks and benefits.

75. In response to a question as to how the concepts of the green economy and of sustainable consumption and production were linked, he said that UNEP had discussed whether the separate teams on the two issues should be merged, given that sustainable consumption and production were integral to the green economy. The former was the implementation of a specific mandate, whereas the latter was a broader, overarching initiative. The Governing Council would discuss a 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production and it remained to be seen whether it would take the subject further.

## **VI. Session 4: Partnership with major groups and stakeholders on the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development**

76. The session aimed to facilitate input from major groups and stakeholders on the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. Key issues to be considered included expectations from the conference; the potential contribution of major groups and stakeholders to the conference; the position of UNEP with regard to the main thematic issues of the conference; and the long-term goals that Governments should agree upon with regard to the green economy and international environmental governance.

77. The session was divided into two parts. In the first part, a keynote speaker, Ms. Lisa Jackson, Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency of the United States of America, addressed the Forum, followed by an open discussion on the process of preparing for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, and related matters; the second part consisted of a panel-led discussion.

### **A. Keynote presentation**

78. In her statement Ms. Jackson said that, as an environmental leader, her fundamental responsibility was to protect the health of the people that she served. That was also beneficial to the economy, as a healthier society meant a more productive workforce. She gave as an example the United States Clean Air Act, which had been calculated to bestow average benefits of \$40 for every \$1 spent. In turn, a healthy community and economy encouraged investment within the overall context of a green economy. Environmental safeguards boosted innovations, such as catalytic converters and water treatment mechanisms, thereby helping to create new industries and jobs. In 2008, the environmental protection industry in the United States employed 1.7 million people and generated \$300 billion in income. She believed that similar results were obtainable around the world, provided that they were pursued through transparent and open processes that included civil society.

79. To encourage the green economy the United States had launched the “E3 initiative” – economy, energy and environment – to align the work of the environment, labour and energy agencies and to promote green manufacturing. In addition, the activities of the environment, housing and transportation ministries were aligned through a partnership for sustainable communities. She stressed, however, that, in building a green economy, government action was not enough – businesses, consumers and workers also needed to be involved. As the Secretary-General had noted in his report for the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (A/CONF.216/PC/2), transparency, public participation and accountability were essential to all aspects of sustainable development. The role of the public sector was to provide a foundation, but it was the private sector that ultimately stepped up to create green jobs, innovate and put clean technology on the market. In addition, strong engagement of non-governmental organizations was needed to ensure that consumers were informed about their choices in the green marketplace. She stressed the need for multi-stakeholder involvement in the consultative process.

80. As an indication of its commitment to strengthening coordination between countries in promoting the green economy, the Environmental Protection Agency was about to sign its first memorandum of understanding with UNEP, and was pleased to be working with the scientific community, non-governmental organizations, industry bodies and Governments through UNEP in relevant areas. Specifically, the Agency aimed to strengthen the scientific leadership of UNEP by sharing knowledge and building effective environmental management regimes at the regional, national and local levels. The Agency was also working with UNEP on specific initiatives, such as the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and development, and the life-cycle data initiative. In conclusion, she said that the Agency was looking forward to deepening its collaboration with all stakeholders in international initiatives to promote the green economy.

81. In the ensuing discussion, representatives raised issues to which Ms. Jackson responded. One representative, recalling that the goal of the United States Presidential Council on Sustainable Development, set up in 1993, was to develop a national strategy for sustainable development, asked

whether there was any possibility of that happening. Ms. Jackson said that there were some hurdles to overcome: for example, while the Environmental Protection Agency was a prime driver of actions encouraging sustainability, because of its formulation and evolution it did not have sustainability as one of its missions. In addition, while people understood the basic concept of sustainability, they did not have a sense of the overriding framework needed to implement it, and further awareness-raising was required. There were, however, encouraging signs that United States authorities were willing to engage in issues of the environment and sustainability at the highest level.

82. In response to a question about international environmental governance and the role of civil society in the reform process, Ms. Jackson said that international environmental governance was one of the Agency's priority areas for 2011. She considered the United States right-to-know law to be one of the strongest in existence, and said that the heart of environmental governance rested in communities having access to information relevant to their health and well-being.

83. Responding to a question on building social support for the transition to a green economy, Ms. Jackson said that that was a difficult issue in the United States, where the environment was often viewed as anti-growth. It was counterproductive to seek to impose answers on major stakeholders, and negotiation and compromise were required to achieve effective alliances.

84. On the question of the work of the Environmental Protection Agency in the area of social sciences and the need for lifestyle changes, Ms. Jackson said that people's behaviour, and how and where they chose to live, were important in relation to sustainable consumption and production. Social sciences were interdisciplinary, and the Agency sought to take that into account when considering lifestyle issues. On the matter of overconsumption, she said that e-waste was a very significant priority, both nationally and internationally.

85. One representative said that the United States had historically been part of the climate change problem but not part of the solution, and asked what the Clean Air Act could do to counteract the lack of action. Ms. Jackson responded that climate change was indeed a matter requiring urgent action and said that the President of the United States was committed to helping move forward the international agenda on the issue. The Clean Air Act, she said, pertained to both pollutants and greenhouse gases, and the Environmental Protection Agency had issued guidelines and standards to move industry towards more efficient and cleaner use of energy. More regulations were being phased in, for example in the power and refinery sector, which was responsible for about 45 per cent of United States greenhouse-gas emissions. The Act had prompted a history of innovation in the private sector, as industries overcame through the development of new technology.

86. Another representative asked how the Agency could provide leadership on the matter of legally binding access rights, which were lacking in most countries. Ms. Jackson stressed the right of citizens to environmental justice, noting that President Obama had supported the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and that the Agency played a significant role in building capacity, and said that the information revolution was helping societies to obtain information swiftly.

87. Responding to a question about environmental coordination in North America, Ms. Jackson said that work was under way in various forums to integrate the concerns of Canada, Mexico and the United States.

88. One representative drew attention to the role played by ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability in promoting a green urban economy and developing sustainability indicators for a green community. Ms. Jackson agreed that the urban economy and environment were closely linked, and said that it was important to explore opportunities to increase the liveability of urban areas through measures such as green buffer zones. She also said that most water pollution in the United States came from storm water run-off, noting that the infrastructure investment required to rectify that posed a huge challenge.

89. Responding to a question about the role of businesses, Ms. Jackson stressed the need to integrate the business community into efforts to improve international environmental governance. Recognizing the problems being faced in the United States in that regard, she said that it was important for representatives at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development to pay close attention to the subject of business involvement in the green economy.

90. One representative, noting the global constraints that were inhibiting progress on environmental awareness, including the political turmoil gripping North Africa, the Middle East and West Asia, and the rise in the prices of food and commodities, asked what could be done to improve the environmental component of free trade agreements, and what opportunities existed for civil society to play a role in that process. Ms. Jackson said that recent consideration had been given to the

environmental component of the North American Free Trade Agreement and how to engage civil society in the matter. The process had not been a complete success but a framework for further deliberation on the issue was in place.

91. On the matter of climate change and greenhouse-gas emissions, she acknowledged that the current political balance in the United States meant that it was difficult to make progress. Sensitive political dialogue was continuing, although investment was hard to come by in the current economic climate.

92. In answer to a question on consultations with stakeholders on chemicals safety and management, Ms. Jackson said that the Environmental Protection Agency did more work with a range of stakeholders than often was realized. That collaboration was vital in developing a chemical safety framework, although there were often polarized views on the issue.

93. In conclusion, Ms. Jackson assured the representatives that the Agency supported strong international environmental governance and would continue to work through relevant forums to support the efforts of global major groups and stakeholders to achieve that end.

## **B. Other presentations**

94. The members of the panel were Mr. Michele Candotti, Principal Adviser to the Executive Director and head of the Office for Policy and Inter-Agency Affairs, UNEP; Ms. Fatoumata Keita-Ouane, head of the Early Warning and Assessment Branch, Division of Early Warning and Assessment, UNEP; Mr. Felix Dodds, Executive Director, Stakeholder Forum for a Sustainable Future; Mr. Aron Belinky, Brazilian Forum of Non-Governmental Organizations and Social Movements for the Environment and Development; and Ms. Christine von Weizsäcker, Ecoropa.

95. The panel considered potential input from major groups and stakeholders into the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, looking at the following key questions:

- (a) What were the expectations from the Conference?
- (b) What could be the potential contribution of major groups and stakeholders to the Conference?
- (c) What were the positions of UNEP with regard to the key thematic issues of the Conference?
- (d) What long-term goals should Governments agree upon with regard to the green economy, international environmental governance and governance for sustainable development for the coming 20 years?

96. In his presentation, Mr. Candotti outlined the strategy of UNEP on the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, emphasizing the importance of breaking down the key elements of the preparations for the Conference to achieve better mutual understanding and to flag key ambitions. He defined the role of UNEP in the process as feeding analysis into each part of the agenda, thus providing an important service for stakeholders and Governments to assist discussions and the building of consensus.

97. The ambitions of UNEP for the Conference were to reconcile the aims of the key protagonists with the needs of the planet and its population; to establish the three elements of economics, social and equity values, and environmental sustainability as mutually reinforcing parts of sustainable development; to provide an honest stocktaking of what was preventing progress on things that had been agreed upon and how to address the perception that multilateral approaches were increasingly associated with stalemates; and to achieve consensus on a new development path. By setting high ambitions, UNEP aimed to go beyond the agenda of the Conference and make a leap forward in international negotiations, including by tackling emerging issues. To that end, UNEP was seeking the contribution of the major groups and stakeholders in formulating and consolidating proposals to Governments and the Conference participants.

98. Ms. Keita-Ouane discussed the Global Environmental Outlook assessment programme as one of the tools that UNEP could use to support major groups and stakeholders. The programme was multidisciplinary, bringing together partners and science and policy experts worldwide and building capacity for developing countries, and the programme's well-known reports, in which the results of the assessments were collected and discussed, provided information on the state of, trends in and outlook for the global environment with proposals for options to meet environmental challenges. Four editions of the report had been produced and the fifth was being prepared. Compared to earlier

editions, the fifth report would focus more on solutions and would explore the interactions between the environment and the economy. It would offer options for regional action and for a global response to key challenges, and would be strongly linked to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. The aim of the report was to keep the state of and trends in the global environment under review; to highlight regional priorities and analyse policy options; and to review the sustainable change and innovation needed in the long term. International scientific and policy experts would contribute to the process with advisory support from the High-Level Intergovernmental Advisory Panel and Science and Policy Advisory Board. The Global Environmental Outlook would support the Conference with the main report, a summary for policymakers, training modules on international environmental governance and an updated website.

99. In his presentation, Mr. Dodds reviewed the preparations for the Conference. He noted that the 20 years since the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development had been characterized by lost opportunities, suggesting that it was time to refocus. There had been a sense of optimism in 1992 but that had been followed by a decline in aid flows, which did not recover to previous levels until the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002. There had been some positive developments in the intervening years, but time had been lost and it was imperative to take a bold approach to the 2012 Conference. He flagged a number of possible outcomes from the Conference that would be positive achievements, such as the adoption of clear resolutions on international environmental governance, the upgrading of UNEP to a specialized agency of the United Nations, the strengthening of sustainable development governance to deal with water security and other issues, with national-level sustainable development processes in all countries, and more international regulation with regard to the green economy. To achieve political buy-in from Governments would be a significant challenge, and the active involvement of financial institutions and UNEP was also vital if the Conference was to be a significant success.

100. Mr. Belinky spoke of the preparations for the Conference from the viewpoint of the Government of Brazil, looking at bridging the gap between international environmental governance and governance for sustainable development and the need for an institutional framework for sustainable development with which to do so. Such a framework should be based on the economic, social and environmental pillars with the green economy serving to bring the three together.

101. As host country of the Conference, the Government of Brazil had a clear vision for the preparations and the meeting itself in line with the United Nations General Assembly resolution 64/236 of 24 December 2009. Parallel but interlinked processes were already under way involving civil society, the Green Economy Coalition and national dialogues on the green economy, with a view to preparing the ground for and looking beyond the Conference. Civil society had an important role in bringing to the attention of Governments the issues for consideration and a sense of urgency. In conclusion, he outlined the series of intersessional and preparatory committee meetings that would be taking place in the run-up to the Conference.

102. Ms. Weizsäcker focused on civil society's role in the preparations for the Conference, noting that it represented contributions from a wide range of backgrounds, experience and knowledge of global realities. She drew attention to some disturbing aspects of the global situation not hitherto considered by the panellists that affected sustainability and the greening of economies: war and armed conflict with concomitant corruption and unstable economies; strong geopolitical and economic conflicts, especially between the North and South; and powerful stakeholders with strong lobbies in capitals. She cautioned that the way to democracy, the rule of law and environmental and social protection was slow and that consensus among major groups could not be assumed. It was nevertheless important to strengthen the civil society platform to create and sustain political will irrespective of differences.

103. Key elements of the Conference that were being considered by civil society were the prevention of further environmental damage, legal efforts to enforce the polluter-pays principle, meeting financial obligations and tools for environmental protection and sustainable development. The Conference could provide a toolkit that would empower civil society as a motivated partner in moving towards a green economy in the form of rules on liability and redress, systematic assessments of new and emerging technologies, and implementation of Rio Principle 10. It was important not to lose the gains already won in the Conference process and the existing United Nations platform for creating international legal environmental frameworks.

104. In the ensuing discussion, several representatives thanked the panellists for encapsulating what needed to be done to prepare for the Conference and for setting out key elements and strategies. One emphasized that it was important to identify areas of difficulty and to plan effectively for lobbying and working on those with other agencies; he called upon the panellists to highlight some of the problem

areas. Another said that a list of non-governmental organizations that would be active in the process would be useful.

105. One representative spoke about the experience of non-governmental organizations on the ground and the danger that they were losing credibility as a result of the lack of financial support for their activities, calling for commitments already made to be honoured to enable Governments to fulfil promises; the public was waiting for proper implementation of resolutions made.

106. Speaking on behalf of trade unions, another representative said that the world faced a serious social crisis in the form of a lack of rights and protections for many workers, and the movement was preparing to mobilize massively for the Conference around the critical issues of economic governance, social protection, nutrition, the green economy and democracy. The movement was looking for a specific agenda from the Conference with pledges on green jobs.

107. Another representative endorsed the call for environmental democracy and the establishment of global rights on behalf of those who had no voice. She called upon UNEP to hold Governments accountable for pledges made under Rio Principle 10 and for a timetable for action; she sought information on how statements from the current session could become inputs for the Conference process or whether individual lobbying was the only means of influencing it.

108. A number of representatives expressed interest in how to become more involved in the Conference preparations, asking what role intergovernmental organizations such as the European Union and the African Union were playing. One called for a mechanism for direct civil society involvement in the outcomes of the Conference and for grass-roots participation through schools, educational programmes and universities, among other things. Another asked what action Brazilian civil society was taking to ensure active participation in informal meetings ahead of the Conference. A representative of indigenous people called for their greater involvement since they were at the grass-roots level in respect of all environmental issues.

109. One representative drew attention to the need to tackle unsustainable consumption patterns, saying that it had not received significant attention during the session but should be an overarching objective of the green economy.

110. In their closing remarks the members of the panel responded to some of the comments made. The need for training in lobbying and for capacity-building workshops was acknowledged. Mr. Dodds observed that the involvement of major groups and stakeholders was not as advanced as it should be. Regional preparatory meetings would, however, be taking place with capacity-building workshops and more multi-stakeholder meetings would be organized. The Conference should afford an opportunity for an alternative type of engagement and the major groups should have a significant role in and be an integral part of the process. UNEP had prepared a paper on commitments by Governments with timelines, which would be made available for the meetings of the preparatory committee.

111. Mr. Belinky acknowledged that there was a lack of trust at the grass-roots level created by a failure to meet commitments and that that presented challenges for the promotion of the green economy. It was essential to make clear that the Conference was not a way of blocking the development of poorer countries but rather of promoting the potential power of the green economy. Representatives at the Conference therefore had to come up with clear, objective proposals and the means to overcome the mistrust of many countries.

112. On the issue of trust, Ms. Weizsäcker said that regions could learn from one another; Europe could learn from the legislation of the African Union, for example. Trust could also be created by building on personal relations between self-motivated people in all walks of life.

113. Mr. Candotti cautioned against becoming distracted by tactical issues; solid approaches to genuine issues were needed. On the green economy, answers had to be provided that could be adapted to local situations. It was important not to lose sight of opportunities to promote the green economy agenda, for example by exploiting the connection between the financial crisis and environmental issues. Civil society had a clear contribution to make to the process by breaking down key issues into readily digestible components that were understandable at the local level.

114. Ms. Keita-Ouane noted that environmental agreements often lacked evaluation processes. The Global Environmental Outlook would be considering progress made in implementation and reviewing policy options. She urged the representatives to make use of the fifth Global Environment Outlook report during the Conference as it would provide up-to-date information on developments.

115. Mr. Belinky assured the representatives that the Government of Brazil was planning informal civil society meetings in Rio de Janeiro and that indigenous peoples would be represented at the Conference.

## VII. Session 5: Refining the key messages to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environmental Forum

116. Mr. Juras gave a presentation on the format and conduct of typical Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum sessions, drawing attention to the multiplicity of parallel events and meetings that took place during such sessions. The Governing Council was the highest decision-making political authority of UNEP dealing with global environmental issues and development challenges. The work of the Global Ministerial Environment Forum focused on the review of important and emerging policy issues on environment while the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum provided an opportunity for the exchange of views and expertise between major groups and stakeholders and the preparation of inputs for consideration by the Governing Council. He underscored the priority accorded by UNEP to dialogue with major groups and stakeholders and outlined the framework for civil society participation at Governing Council sessions, providing an overview of designated seats for civil society representatives in plenary meetings, meetings of the committee of the whole and of drafting groups and ministerial consultations. In closing, he stressed that social and side events and the corridors provided opportunities for lobbying government representatives and forging alliances.

117. During the session, brief presentations on key messages to be delivered to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its twenty-sixth session were made by representatives of major groups and regions.

118. A representative speaking on behalf of farmers highlighted the need to use the green economy to implement a paradigm shift, rather than to re-label existing initiatives, and to forge a clear direction for the business sector. He emphasized the importance of health, ecology, fairness and care for all. The green economy must allow for the participation of and benefits for the poor and not accelerate inequities under a green label.

119. The representative speaking on behalf of the science and technology community said that, during the transition to a green economy, scientific and technological information was crucial to clarify and monitor progress and impacts. The green economy cut across the three pillars of sustainable development, including social sciences, natural sciences, health, economics and humanities. Collaboration would be essential at all levels of the transition process with the participation of policymakers, civil society and businesses, among others, on setting agendas and defining key problems. Local-scale research would be important to assess environmental impacts and enable adaptation and transition to a green economy. He stressed that activities should focus on vulnerable groups, including women and indigenous peoples, and transition processes should include education and capacity-building, including for scientists and the general public, to ensure ownership. Inclusion, transparency, education and capacity-building, interdisciplinarity and access to information were all key to the transition.

120. A representative speaking on behalf of business and industry welcomed UNEP engagement in the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, urging it to work closely with all stakeholders in the lead-up to the conference and to exploit synergies across issues and levels. She emphasized the importance of enabling frameworks and capacity-building as critical for the implementation of, and interconnections and synergies across, the green economy. The green economy was embedded in sustainable development and must be global to reach its full potential, greening all elements of the economy and fostering innovation. In addition, it should be integrated and self-sustaining in the context of global markets. Realities would vary by sector, leading to numerous versions of the green economy. Employment was of paramount importance; efforts to green jobs must not lead to fewer jobs. Companies needed to remain competitive and the public sector should work closely with the private sector. She expressed strong support for strengthening international environmental governance, enhancing the engagement of business and other groups therein. She stressed the need for a system-wide strategy for the environment, with all entities striving better to accommodate sustainability. Economic and social institutions needed to be more responsive, with greater integration and strengthening of the science-policy interface and meaningful developing country participation. Appropriate synergies should be exploited across compatible multilateral environmental agreements while preserving their independent status. Widening and deepening the funding base for the environment was essential.

121. A representative speaking on behalf of workers and trade unions said that strong organizations were crucial to better international environmental governance, including in respect of compliance, information, transparency and public access to information. Workers required access to information to enable them to participate in decisions on environmental management. With adequate planning, the green economy offered a means to restructure the economy to deliver results. The green economy

should be based on equity between and within countries, resulting in the redistribution of costs and benefits in an equitable manner. From the outset, it was important to make fiscal policy more inclusive, including from the gender equality perspective. The green economy should avoid discrimination, support the family unit and young people, who were suffering the worst unemployment and lack of access to markets. It should seek to create high-quality green jobs and to widen social protection schemes, should be based on the real economy and be non-speculative, and promote democracy and social dialogue, fulfilling social objectives and satisfying human needs in the long term.

122. A representative speaking on behalf of local authorities said that the involvement of local authorities was essential for the success of the green economy. On international environmental governance or the institutional framework for sustainable development, interconnected multilevel governance down to the community level was crucial.

123. A representative speaking on behalf of women said that more women should hold influential decision-making positions in sectors such as finance, environment, education and health, following the example of Norway and Rwanda, among others. A database providing information on best practices, baselines and women's progress was required, together with clearly stated indicators that were agreed to by women. She stressed the importance of providing green jobs for women and remuneration for jobs such as household management that were not normally paid. Women needed access to carbon credits and a work environment that was free from gender-based violence and took into account their needs, including childcare. They needed legal support to protect their rights, including those related to natural resources. Funds should be made available for information dissemination to women at all levels, including through mobile telephony, radio, television and other innovative means.

124. A representative speaking on behalf of non-governmental organizations said that transparency, public participation and accountability were essential elements of sound international environmental governance. In keeping with General Assembly resolution 65/162 of 20 December 2010, major groups and stakeholders should be afforded the opportunity to participate fully in the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. Governments should be encouraged to engage in the conference to take advantage of the opportunities that it presented to tackle global challenges. At the conference, agreements should be developed on the basis of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration, the precautionary principle and corporate accountability, among other things. He highlighted the lack of compliance with and implementation of multilateral environmental agreements, calling for the international environmental governance structure to create a system for environmental justice. The current session of the Forum should be webcast to maximize civil society participation. Lastly, UNEP should be upgraded to a specialized agency of the United Nations.

125. Another representative speaking on behalf of non-governmental organizations stressed that the main goal of a green economy needed to be refined to ensure an inclusive economy with defined carrying capacity limits, a road map and clear targets based on the internationally agreed definitions of sustainable development. The green economy should be based on the common efforts of all stakeholders and implement enhanced corporate responsibility. Other significant elements included a financial and legal framework for the green economy, awareness-raising and education for stakeholders and transparency. Speaking in her personal capacity, she said that civil society in the South was concerned that the green economy could represent a new barrier to trade for the region.

126. A representative speaking on behalf of indigenous peoples stressed that their participation at international meetings, including the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, needed to be maximized following examples such as meetings of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Human Rights Council and the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Indigenous peoples needed to be involved in the national and international work of UNEP not only as stakeholders but also as rights-holders. The rights of indigenous communities, including to land, resources and free and prior informed consent, should be protected in the implementation of the green economy in accordance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. UNEP should provide capacity-building on new technologies and information on emerging environmental issues for indigenous peoples. Financing from the Global Environment Facility should be available to indigenous peoples and local communities, if possible through dedicated funds for that purpose.

127. A representative speaking on behalf of children and young people emphasized the importance of environmental justice. It was necessary to work on a long-term vision incorporating the rights of future generations on the basis of the precautionary principle, ensuring the sustainable use of resources, including through monitoring mechanisms, with a clear focus on tipping points and irreversible damage. She underscored the importance of meaningful participation and empowerment of stakeholders, including by increasing accountability, implementing the polluter pays principle and

establishing mechanisms for justice and accountability. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development should be focused on real impacts for real people and should not lower its ambitions to the lowest common denominator. It should aim to achieve key steps in moving to a broader paradigm change, which could be achieved only with the participation of all stakeholders. Environmental crises should be tackled with a science-based approach, ensuring that political action was in line with scientific findings and recommendations.

128. A representative speaking on behalf of Latin America and the Caribbean, commenting on the weak global environmental structure and recalling discussions on the desirability of having a world environmental organization, suggested that UNEP should be strengthened to enable it to play a stronger leadership role in view of the grave environmental situation. She drew particular attention to the requirement to coordinate and implement programmes at the regional level and to include the participation of regional groups. In that context she called for the strengthening of the UNEP office in her region.

129. In relation to the green economy she said that fiscal and market mechanisms needed to be established to facilitate sustainable economic activities and discourage unsustainable practices, and that enhanced capacity-building and technology transfer, especially to small and medium-sized enterprises, would help to ensure sustainable economies. A change was required in the way in which the wealth and economic development of countries was measured, diverging from the current focus on gross domestic product, since that yardstick excluded environmental costs and considerations. In that context she drew attention to the development models of countries whose economies were based on the exploitation of natural resources, particularly minerals.

130. She said that there was a need for greater awareness of major group and stakeholder participation in UNEP forums and that better use could be made of their input. She urged Governments to ensure that consultations took place in all regions as a priority as part of the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, given the limited time remaining, and that major groups and stakeholders should be fully involved. She also requested the Governing Council to convey to the General Assembly the message that it was necessary to broaden stakeholder involvement.

131. A representative speaking on behalf of West Asia expressed his region's support for strengthening international environmental governance, stressing the need for a strong and credible science-policy interface, a strong voice on environmental sustainability, effective UNEP programmes with adequate funding and a responsive, cohesive effort to meet country needs, especially the requirements of developing countries for scientific research capacity. He laid particular emphasis on transparency, accountability and meaningful public participation. The region considered that it was fundamentally necessary to examine incremental short-term and long-term options for improving environmental governance concurrently. In relation to the green economy, the region was in favour of the new initiatives, with the proviso that they should ensure social justice, promote human values, work towards poverty alleviation, optimal resource use and waste minimization and confront environmental degradation. The region was in favour of developments in the use of renewable energy and transport and called upon Governments to mobilize efforts, enforce regulations and provide investment facilities. In conclusion, he urged UNEP further to support its regional offices, to strengthen cooperation with stakeholders with regard to the green economy and to build an information network for West Asian States.

132. A representative speaking on behalf of North America voiced agreement with many of the issues raised by others and support for UNEP regarding the green economy initiative. He singled out, in particular, the aspects of transparency, public participation and accountability, and the environmental mediation programme, in addition to the need to facilitate the role of civil society and encourage the development of national policy frameworks on sustainable consumption and production. He urged the United Nations to lead by example on procurement issues and to assist in promoting regional sustainability plans and monitoring national commitments.

133. A representative speaking on behalf of Europe drew attention to discussions on the need to enhance the role of national committees and to use them to carry out UNEP activities at the national level. He expressed the view that, in addition to supporting the green economy, UNEP should examine and counter the driving forces behind unsustainable economic activities and should facilitate national dialogue between stakeholders and other interested parties aimed at designing practical measures to tackle unsustainable economic activities.

134. A representative speaking on behalf of Africa called for revisiting the environmental initiatives under the New Partnership for Africa's Development and the prevailing ideas on international environmental governance. She outlined the need to clarify for local communities the concept of the

green economy since it was little understood, especially at the grass-roots level; to support indigenous peoples to enable them to participate actively in the green economy; to transfer technology to enable the adoption of sources of renewable energy; and to support Governments and major groups and stakeholders to adopt the principles of the green economy. She drew attention to an initiative to set up a facility through the African Development Bank that would focus on consumption and production issues. She invited UNEP and the Government of Brazil, as the host country of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, to hold regional and subregional consultations to ensure as broad participation as possible in the conference. In conclusion, she said that there was a need for enhanced participation and involvement of major groups and stakeholders in the work of UNEP.

135. A representative speaking on behalf of African women's groups stressed that voluntary and paid work were equally important. She drew attention to the role of cooperatives in the green economy in production and marketing, to the need to focus on children and young people, to the possible benefits in terms of transparency and accountability of personnel rotations within local government administrations, and to the development of tools to attract green resources.

136. A representative speaking on behalf of Asia and the Pacific highlighted the importance to the green economy of creating or strengthening mechanisms to enable knowledge sharing, expertise, the securing of financial resources and the building of partnerships. He drew attention to various initiatives and prototypes, while acknowledging the need for ways in which the stakeholders of the region could interact more.

137. Subsequently, the representatives engaged in drafting key messages, which were to be submitted to the Council/Forum.

## **VIII. Evaluation of the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum**

138. Representatives were requested to evaluate the current session by means of a feedback form for completion. Several representatives also commented orally.

139. Many representatives expressed appreciation for the presentations by the Executive Director, invited speakers and panellists, for the meetings arranged with the regional directors, for the spirit of cooperation and sharing and the exchange of ideas and for the good guidance of the facilitator. One representative, however, expressed the view that the new paperless format of the session provided some distraction from the content of the meeting, calling for a blend of high and low technologies, perhaps using recycled paper, while another representative suggested printing on demand.

140. One representative commented on the lack of a clear agenda in the regional consultations, saying that the process was unclear to many. Several said that the session had been too short and should be extended by a day, subject to the availability of financial resources, to allow for informal meetings before the Governing Council session, and the possibility of more facilitation and working in small groups. Another representative pointed out the likelihood that the Forum would see increased participation in 2012 in the run-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, voicing support for a longer session.

141. One representative expressed the view that the former title of the session, the Global Civil Society Forum, resonated better with many and called for a return to that title. Another expressed the hope that the input provided during the session would mark a breakthrough in increasing the Forum's influence on the Governing Council.

## **IX. Closing session**

142. Ms. Shaika al-Alaiwi, representative of children and young people and Tunza adviser for West Africa, emphasized the importance of countries striving to develop unique strategies to provide green jobs. Young people were significant stakeholders in environmental decision-making who had a responsibility to inspire others and work together towards a common future living in peace with sustainable development attained through a green lifestyle. Those who made the effort would reap the benefits of a new and green world peace.

143. Ms. Nishimoto expressed her appreciation to all the representatives for their active engagement throughout the session. She encouraged them to use every opportunity to liaise with others during the twenty-sixth session of the Governing Council, including through informal networks, and to be bold in expressing their positions.

144. The twelfth Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum was declared closed at 5.40 p.m. on Sunday, 20 February 2011.

145. Following the closure of the session, representatives viewed a film entitled *Silent Snow*, which described the journey of a young Inuit woman to three continents, investigating the sources of pollution that threatened the traditional Inuit lifestyle.

---