

Civil society statement on International Environmental Governance

***During the seventh Governing council Special Session
Cartagena, Columbia, February 2002***

The civil society welcomes the discussion on the strengthening of international environmental governance. We would like to underline, however, that the strengthening of IEG should evolve with a new impetus for sustainable development governance.

Good governance must take due regard to broad based rights and public participation in decision making processes at all levels based on principles of transparency, accountability, subsidiarity, democracy; equity; human rights; common but differentiated responsibility and precaution as it has advanced from principle 15 of the Rio Declaration.

The international environmental regime is dogged by the lack of political will to resolve environmental problems and to follow a policy for the sustainable use of the Earth's resources. This has led to fragmentation, limited financial resources, poor enforcement of multilateral environmental agreements, as well as an imbalance between international environmental governance and other international trade and financial regimes.

After 10 years of failure to meet the commitments agreed at Rio and given the continued deterioration of the global environment, it is clear that strengthening environmental governance, within the context of sustainable development, is an imperative. It is time for Environmental Ministers to demonstrate new political will and momentum for sustainable development which should lead to a strengthened environmental governance at international, regional, national and local levels.

Current global governance, inequities in the global financial structure, external debt, militarism and the lack of transparency in international decision making processes are conditions that make it difficult to implement appropriate environmental governance.

Good international environmental governance begins with good environmental governance at the regional, national and local levels. We therefore call for ministers and UNEP to work towards institutionalisation of mechanisms for active and meaningful participation of major groups in sustainable development processes such as regional, national and local councils and dialogues. We also urge Ministers and UNEP to ensure that national delegations to UNEP meeting include non-governmental representation.

We also call upon Ministers and UNEP to mobilise political will to strengthen international environmental governance, and to consider the following recommendations:

- To fundamentally and dramatically strengthen the role and authority of UNEP and the proposal for UNEP to become a specialised agency should be considered.
- A new and expanded mandate of UNEP should consider clear goals and be based upon the foundation of the principles of policy integration, broad based

participation, transparency and accountability (based on the standard assessment for UN contributions).

- to expand UNEP's responsibilities to include, inter alia, multilateral environmental agreements. Reporting procedures and implementation projects under the various MEAs should be rationalised and coordinated.
- to maintain UNEP's headquarters in Nairobi and strengthen UNEP in the regions.
- to utilize UNEP's Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum more effectively both in promoting international cooperation in the field of the environment and in providing broad overarching policy advice. The membership of GC/GMEF must be universal. The work of the GC/GMEF should be supported by better scientific advice.
- Ensuring that UNEP receives increased, predictable and stable financial resources. The new system should be based upon the principles of common but differentiated responsibility, assessed contributions and multi-annual financial commitments.
- The work of the Environmental Management Group should be strengthened inter alia for better coordination, coherence, joint compliance and capacity building efforts.

We call on Ministers to sign, ratify and implement all existing MEAs in the run up to, at and after WSSD. Moreover it is important:

- To identify and exploit synergies between MEAs in order to deliver enhanced coherence and efficiency, two essential means for this are clustering of relevant agreements and co-location of secretariats. This should not prevent the placing of secretariats in developing countries.
- To advance coherent reporting, monitoring and follow-up of implementation of multilateral environmental agreements, linked to improved compliance and ensuring access to civil society.
- To include provisions in all MEAs that ensure compliance and enforcement. A mechanism for environmental dispute settlement should be established, which should be open for participation by civil society representatives. We back the proposal for a strategy on implementation support for developing countries. The needs of Small Island Developing States should in particular be taken into account. Additional resources should also be provided to countries with economies in transition.
- To address the issues raised by conflicts between Trade, Financial and Environment regimes.
- To launch a review process within UNEP with the aim of ensuring compatibility between trade, investment, environment policies and processes.
- To ensure that the application of trade related rules within MEAs need to be respected under the WTO.