



Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme

Distr.: General
5 April 2007

English only



Eighth Global Civil Society Forum
Nairobi, 3 and 4 February 2007

Report of the eighth Global Civil Society Forum

Introduction

1. The eighth Global Civil Society Forum was held in Nairobi, Kenya, on 3 and 4 February 2007.
2. Prior to the session, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) had coordinated a regional civil society process, which had featured regional meetings and had resulted in the preparation of six regional civil society statements. Based on those statements, the Global Civil Society Steering had subsequently written a global civil society statement for presentation to the United Nations Environment Programme Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its twenty-fourth session, to be held in Nairobi from 5 to 9 February 2007. The global statement contained observations and recommendations relating to four areas on the agenda of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum: globalization, ecosystem services and human well-being; gender and environment; water and environment; and chemicals management. A copy of the global statement is contained in annex I to the present report.
3. Participants at the Global Civil Society Forum had the opportunity to discuss those issues further, to discuss the work programme of the Global Steering Committee, to identify priorities to be drawn to the attention of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, to consider how those attending the twenty-fourth session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum might make the most of their presence at the session, to refine further the global civil society statement, to engage with the Executive Director and major groups of UNEP and to discuss the issue of globalization and ecosystem services with representatives of business and industry, local authorities, indigenous peoples and their communities and Governments.

I. Opening of the session

A. Opening statements

4. The Eighth Global Civil Society Forum was opened at 9.20 a.m. on Saturday, 3 February 2007, by Ms. Christina Boelcke, Director of the UNEP Division of Regional Cooperation.
5. Opening statements were made by Mr. George Odera-Outa, African Council for Communication Education, the organization that had served as the secretariat for the Forum, Mr. Michael Koech, Chair of the Global Civil Society Steering Committee, and Mr. Shafqat Kakakhel, Deputy Executive Director of UNEP, who spoke on behalf of Mr. Achim Steiner, Executive Director of UNEP.

6. Mr. Odera-Outa welcomed the participants to Nairobi, which he described as the one of the most politically and socially vibrant cities in the world. He noted that the African Council for Communication Education had been established in 1974 with the support of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and he expressed his appreciation that the Council had been chosen by UNEP to act as secretariat for the present meeting. He underlined the importance attached by the Council to environmental conservation and to the deliberations that would take place at the present meeting. He stressed the significance of civil society policy advice in informing ministers who would be participating at the twenty-fourth session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum and wished participants fruitful deliberations to that end.

7. Mr. Koech wished the meeting participants a happy and productive stay in Kenya. He outlined steps taken in the development of the global civil society statement to the twenty-fourth session of the Council/Forum, including the establishment of the Global Civil Society Steering Committee in 2006, the election of representatives from each of the six regions of UNEP to the Committee and the subsequent drafting of the statement, which, it was to be hoped, would prove to be useful in the coming days.

8. In his remarks, Mr. Kakakhel noted that the relationship between civil society and UNEP dated back to the latter's inception, reaching its peak in 2000 in Malmö, Sweden, where the first Global Civil Society Forum had been organized. He said that although the relationship between UNEP and global civil society had improved throughout the last three decades, greater efforts were needed to improve the organization of the Forum and to heighten the level of communication between UNEP and civil society organizations. He stressed that the current meeting was the culmination of a wide-ranging process of regional consultations in which certain groups, including business and industry, farmers and local authorities, had not been fully represented. A major challenge before the participants was therefore to develop practical suggestions for achieving a higher level of interaction with all major groups in order to make the Forum truly representative. The development of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) constituted a successful example of deeper interaction among all key actors and could serve as an inspiration for other areas of dialogue and policy-making.

9. The forthcoming session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum would take place against a backdrop of momentous global developments, including a much greater awareness of and scientific agreement on the severity and magnitude of environmental problems and a greater political recognition of the central role of environmental issues in human survival and well-being, as reflected in the 2005 World Summit Outcome. In that context, he urged participants to convey a message to the new Secretary-General of the United Nations that there was a need to continue the quest for more a sustainable relationship between humans and nature. In closing, he wished participants successful deliberations on the issues to be addressed in the forthcoming session, including the relationship between globalization and the environment, United Nations reform, the UNEP water policy and strategy, how to improve the UNEP role of keeping the environment under review and the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building.

II. Organization of work

A. Election of officers

10. The following officers were elected for the eighth Global Civil Society Forum:

Chair:	Mr. Michael Koech, Sustainable Development Network of Kenya
Co-Chair:	Ms. Melanie Nakagawa, Natural Resources Defence Council
1st Vice-chair:	Mr. Mahmoud Khwaja, Sustainable Development Policy Institute
2nd Vice-chair:	Ms. Sascha Gabizon, Women in Europe for a Common Future

B. Adoption of the programme of work and organization of work

11. The Chair presented a provisional programme of work for the session, as developed by regional civil society representatives in collaboration with UNEP and as orally amended during the Forum. The programme, as adopted, is contained in annex II to the present report. It is presented as adopted, without formal editing

12. The Forum participants established five working groups to work on contributions to be made to the civil society statement to be delivered to the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its twenty-fourth meeting. The Forum participants agreed to the following focal topics and chairs for the five working groups:

Globalization	Mr. Tom Hammond, World Conservation Union (IUCN)
Water	Ms. Nakagawa
Chemicals	Ms. Gabizon
Gender	Ms. Betsy Apple, Women's Environment and Development
Others	Mr. Gordon Bispham, Caribbean Policy Development Centre

C. Attendance

13. The Forum was attended by 200 representatives of civil society organizations from the following countries and territories: Algeria, Australia, Bahrain, Barbados, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, China, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Greenland, Italy, Kenya, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Samoa, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Uganda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uzbekistan.

14. It was also attended by representatives of UNEP. The full list of participants, which has not been formally edited, is attached in annex III to the present report.

III. Session 1: review of selected topics and draft decisions on the agenda of the twenty-fourth session of the United Nations Environment Programme Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum: statements and key messages

15. During the session the global civil society statement prepared by the Global Civil Society Steering Committee for the twenty-fourth session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum was introduced. Representatives of the Global Civil Society Steering Committee and UNEP then made presentations elaborating further on the four main agenda areas covered by the statement: globalization, ecosystem services and human well-being; water and environment; gender and environment; and international chemicals management. General discussion followed the presentations.

A. Introduction of the global civil society statement

16. Mr. Tom Hammond, of the Global Civil Society Steering Committee, introducing the global civil society statement, recalled that it was based on six regional civil society consultation processes that had taken place in October and November 2006, each of which had resulted in its own regional statement. He also described the Steering Committee, which comprised two individuals from each of the six UNEP regions. It was intended that the Steering Committee include a balanced representation of the nine major groups identified in Agenda 21, but it was recognized that that goal had not yet been fully achieved.

17. The global statement, he continued, focused on four major thematic areas of the agenda of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum: globalization, ecosystem services and human well-being; gender and environment; water and environment; and chemicals management. In addition, the Steering Committee urged the Forum participants to bear in mind a number of overarching aims during their deliberations related to such areas as sustainable production; access to environmental data; implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building; public education and participation; system-wide coherence within the United Nations; gender equality and involvement of young people; engagement with the private sector; and the role of the State in environmental protection and sustainable development. In conclusion, he said that further issues had been identified in the six regional consultations but that the present document did not cover them all in

as much as it was an attempt to present a global statement on issues on which there was a broad level of consensus.

B. Globalization, ecosystem services and human well-being

18. Mr. Kilaparti Ramakrishna, Policy Adviser, Office of the Executive Director of UNEP, made a presentation on globalization, ecosystem services and human well-being. He reflected on the positive and negative impacts of the multidimensional globalization that had taken place in the post-industrial era, which had resulted in greatly increased demand for and impact on ecosystem services. UNEP, he said, should carefully consider, within the context of its own mandate, the interface between the negative consequences of globalization and the organization's activities.

19. Globalization, however, also presented opportunities, and it was important for UNEP to recognize and evaluate the role played by political, technological, financial, commercial and other institutions in both the private and public sectors. He drew attention to UNEP initiatives in working with other organizations, including the UNEP-United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Capacity-building Task Force on Trade, Environment and Development and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)-UNEP Poverty and Environment Initiative. UNEP would bring its own particular specializations to such collaborations, for example, by facilitating access to best practices and promoting the integration of ecosystem service considerations into public and private sector decision-making.

C. UNEP water policy and strategy

20. Mr. Tim Kasten, Chief of the Natural Resources Branch of the UNEP Division of Environmental Policy Implementation, spoke about the UNEP water policy and strategy. He noted that freshwater issues had grown in prominence and had been debated in a number of forums since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Important issues included integrated water resource management and the provision of potable water and adequate sanitation to human settlements.

21. The draft water policy and strategy of UNEP, he recalled, responded to decision 23/2 of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, adopted in February 2006. It contained three key components – assessment, management and cooperation – tied together within a framework of integrated water resource management. The water policy and strategy, if adopted, would be a key component of the UNEP 2007-2012 work programme. In conclusion, he said that the process of policy refinements over several bienniums had finally resulted in a water policy and strategy that was strong and practicable and he urged action rather than further discussion.

D. Gender and environment

22. Mr. Ramakrishna provided a progress report regarding UNEP action on gender and the environment. Recalling that the Governing Council had at its last regular session adopted decision 23/11 on gender issues and the environment, he observed that concrete steps had been taken toward gender mainstreaming and addressing environmental issues specific to women. Greater collaboration was being undertaken with women's organizations and the World Conservation Union (IUCN) to elaborate policies, develop projects and ensure full support from senior management of UNEP. The UNEP gender plan of action and its timelines, he said, would be made public in order to improve accountability. Gender focal persons had been identified in all regions of the world and would meet to define their roles and advance gender-related work at UNEP. Further, a senior gender advisor within the office of the Executive Director was soon to be appointed, with the formal search for candidates for that position closing on 11 February 2007.

E. International chemicals management

23. Mr. Matthew Gubb, Coordinator, Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) secretariat, provided an overview of agenda items related to chemicals. He noted that international chemicals management involved a number of policies, conventions, instruments and capacity development efforts and he welcomed the continued involvement of non-governmental organizations in related negotiations. Drawing attention to the report of the Executive Director prepared for the current session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum

(UNEP/GC/24/7), he said that Governments would focus on four topics related to chemicals at that session. First, cooperation at the administrative and programmatic levels between UNEP and multilateral environmental agreements would be enhanced by the convening of an ad hoc committee focused on that issue. Second, progress on the initial implementation of SAICM, including the establishment of a secretariat and the design of an implementation plan within UNEP, would be reviewed. Third, a review of scientific information on the long-range transport of cadmium, including the efforts of a working group convened in Geneva, would inform possible decisions to provide a mandate to continue those discussions and deepen work by UNEP at the national level. Fourth, capacity-building and technical assistance to reduce the supply of, trade in and demand for mercury would likely entail lengthy debate, and the Governing Council would need to consider a full range of options including those submitted by civil society. He concluded by noting that chemicals remained an important concern of member States of the Governing Council and he urged civil society to remain engaged in discussions on chemicals.

F. Discussion

24. During the discussion that followed the foregoing presentations, several key themes emerged. Forum participants agreed that after more than fifteen years of preparation and policy formulation, the time was ripe for action rather than any further policy refinement. Privatization of water and the increasingly common recasting of environmental processes in terminology such as “economic services” were noted with concern by many representatives. In that regard, several representatives argued that human society ought not to treat as commodities environmental functions that were part of an ecological whole; to do so, through privatization or otherwise, was a violation of basic human rights as well as of the ecosystem approach that was recognized as essential to effective environmental management. Other issues raised in the debate included the need for greater public and civic education on the environment; the need to elucidate the linkages between the environment and human health and well-being, particularly with respect to the Millennium Development Goals; the need to pay greater attention to the concerns of trade unions, industry and women; and the important effects of economic partnership agreements and globalization on the environment.

25. Participants also commented on various aspects of the regional preparatory process and the Global Civil Society Steering Committee that had been implemented for the first time for the current Forum. While there was widespread appreciation for the efforts made to prepare for the Forum, some shortcomings were noted. The Global Civil Society Steering Committee had achieved regional balance in representation but had not fully encompassed all nine major groups of civil society. Further, regional perspectives contradicted each other with respect to certain issues such as water privatization, which had made the formulation of common recommendations from civil society difficult. Some groups were better organized at the international rather than the regional level; their perspectives had therefore not been well articulated through the regional preparatory process. Those concerns were noted with gratitude by the Chair of the Global Civil Society Committee, who assured participants that efforts would be made to address such shortcomings through refinement of the preparatory process.

26. Following the comments from the floor, the presenters provided brief responses on the issues raised in the debate. It was observed that UNEP could neither require nor prevent the privatization of water, which remained a prerogative of Governments; the role of UNEP was rather to provide technical assistance such that the poor were not further disadvantaged by such policies. The use of economic terminology in discussions on the environment emanated from efforts by UNEP to broaden engagement in environmental debates. In that regard, it was noted that while economists valued environmental resources according to their utility for human activity whereas ecologists asserted that the environment had an intrinsic value apart from its economic utility, both groups accepted a common goal of protecting the environment for future generations, which was the central focus of UNEP. It was agreed that it was time to engage in action rather than further policy development. In concluding the session, Mr. Hammond urged the continued engagement of civil society with UNEP and said that representatives from civil society would have the opportunity to meet during the week to prepare additional statements from civil society for submission to the Governing Council.

IV. Session 2: work programme of the Global Civil Society Steering Committee

27. Session 2 featured two presentations on the Global Civil Society Steering Committee and discussion thereof. Mr. Bispham, a member of the Global Civil Society Steering Committee, spoke on the Committee's programme of work and Ms. Esther Marianne Neuhaus, Brazilian Forum of NGOs and Social Movements for Sustainable Development, spoke on the Committee's background and role.

28. In his presentation, Mr. Bispham outlined the four key elements envisaged by the Committee for its forthcoming programme of work:

- (a) Broadening and deepening of partnerships;
- (b) Better facilitation of intra- and inter-regional civil society organization networking;
- (c) Facilitation of improved information flows and a more comprehensive communication strategy;
- (d) Facilitation of preparations for the next Global Civil Society Forum cycle.

29. Mr. Bispham asked participants for their views on the four elements and in the discussion that ensued one participant described the need to decide what civil society wanted of its representing committee. He called for an evaluation of the impact made by civil society organizations on global environmental targets, including the Millennium Development Goals, which would allow for political pressure to be applied to Governments that were not delivering results on those targets.

30. One participant questioned the legitimacy of the process that had led to the present Forum. He noted that in his region no valid process had been undertaken to compile subregional priorities and suggested that regional consultations that did not include subregional positions clearly raised issues of legitimacy. He called on the Committee to undertake discussions with UNEP with regard to the provision of a supportive structure and appropriate resources to ensure appropriate representation, adequate participation and legitimacy.

31. A number of participants questioned whether it was plausible to reach consensus in the elaboration of a common global civil society position in view of the variety of often opposing views held by civil society, usually understood in the context of the United Nations to be the nine major groups identified in Agenda 21. One participant said that the experience of civil society involvement at sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development had shown that it was possible to include divergent views in a single position and, indeed, that this reflected the diversity of the civil society family. One participant, pointing to the need to reflect the views of any critical mass of civil society, suggested that including the views expressed by all civil society groups as agreed priorities was not possible.

32. One participant expressed the hope that organic agriculture and its contribution to environmental sustainability would be reflected in the global civil society statement. A number of participants pointed to the need for greater transparency and capacity to exchange information, including more interactive mechanisms such as the website. Several participants asked for clarification of the type of partnerships that were intended to be broadened and deepened as part of the programme of work of the Committee.

33. In responding to points raised, Mr. Bispham noted that the Committee was aware of the need to address the issue of legitimacy, which had been recognized as an ongoing problem for many years. He said that the deepening of partnerships was intended to target partnerships between civil society groups and also between state and non-state entities. He welcomed the calls made for a more interactive civil society website and said that the Committee had clearly recognized the importance of information and raw data in its planning and decision-making.

34. In her presentation, Ms. Neuhaus recalled that the Committee had been established to increase the impact of the Global Civil Society Forum at the Governing Council meetings, to achieve a more continuous engagement of UNEP with civil society organizations and to engage civil society at the level of governance. The Committee, whose members were elected through regional processes, facilitated and brought together the views of different experts and groups that worked on specific thematic issues, respecting the diversity of views expressed and promoting inter-regional dialogue. Ensuring the participation of all major actors presented a challenge, however, as regional consultations had been dominated by environmental non-governmental organizations. In closing, she noted that a specific idea for future work would be the preparation of a background paper by September 2007 on improving the

structure of the Committee and participation in other governmental processes related to environmental policy and implementation of multilateral environmental agreements, such as the Commission on Sustainable Development.

35. In the ensuing discussion, several participants stressed the importance of reaching the grass roots and those actors who addressed environmental issues on the ground, such as indigenous peoples and local communities. It was suggested that the Forum should devise a framework to guide UNEP to reach the grass-roots level, something that according to one participant would require the establishment of regional and national civil society committees to create links with the Global Steering Committee. In response, a member of the Committee said that part of the difficulty in reaching out to the grass roots was that the Global Civil Society Forum operated under the aegis of UNEP, which was global and centralized and, unlike the United Nations Development Programme, had no presence at the national level. This meant that the Forum connected with civil society through networks and that major civil society groups, and not only UNEP, would need to make efforts to reach out to the grass-roots level.

36. One participant suggested that the process of selection of Committee members needed to be improved so that all interested non-governmental organizations would have the opportunity to participate in the regional process and contribute to the work of the Forum even when they could not be physically present. It was also proposed that regional meetings could be held to reflect on how the regions could engage more actors in their work. While acknowledging the importance of regional consultations, one participant noted that some organizations were global in nature and said that the process needed to include them by ensuring multiple entry points.

37. It was suggested that the Committee could benefit from looking at other processes within the United Nations system such as the World Summit for Information Society. Stressing that communication among participants occurred mainly before each Forum and suggesting that there was no way of elaborating what was decided, another proposed that the Committee single out major themes and topics to facilitate discussion after Forums. A member of the group said that thematic issues would be addressed in session 4 in working groups to be chaired by members of the Committee.

38. One participant claimed that, since only those organizations that had been accredited by UNEP could attend the sessions of the UNEP Governing Council, it was crucial to ensure that more organizations got accreditation and that those that had been accredited and were present effectively participated in the process. A member of the Committee said that civil society organizations merely needed to be international in scope to be able to participate in Governing Council meetings and noted that the issue would be discussed further during session 3.

39. One participant suggested that the name of the Steering Committee should be modified to clarify that it played a facilitating role. Another said that irrespective of its name, the idea of a global forum in which divergent positions could be brought together was commendable, as many environmental issues were explosive, making agreement among key civil society groups unlikely.

V. Session 3: civil society engagement at the twenty-fourth session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum

40. Session 3 featured presentations and discussion on how to make the most of civil society involvement at the twenty-fourth and future sessions of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum. Ms. Gabizon acted as facilitator of the session. She noted that UNEP had made considerable efforts to create a space for civil society to participate in policy making, which had proven a difficult task given financial constraints and resistance by some Governments to increased participation of non-governmental actors. One-hundred-eighty-one civil society organizations, a third of which had joined the process during the last year, had been accredited; this represented a step forward even though regional representation was still unbalanced. In addition, there were many opportunities for civil society organizations to work with UNEP, for instance through co-publications.

41. Mr. Olivier Deleuze, Chief of the Major Groups and Stakeholders Branch of the UNEP Division of Regional Cooperation, outlined arrangements for civil society participation at the twenty-fourth session of the Council/Forum, which would feature plenary meetings and meetings of the Committee of the Whole, saying that the latter normally comprised expert civil servants and worked on draft decisions for possible adoption by the Council/Forum on many issues including, in particular, the budget of UNEP. Civil society representatives had been allocated nine seats in the ministerial consultations and nine seats in the Committee of the Whole. Two themes would be covered during the ministerial

consultations, which were scheduled to take place from Monday afternoon to Wednesday afternoon, namely, “globalization and the environment” and “United Nations reform”.

42. The opening plenary meeting of the Council/Forum on the morning of Monday, 5 February would include opening statements and speeches, including the policy statement of the Executive Director of UNEP, and would be followed by the first panel discussion on globalization and the environment. The agenda of the Committee of the Whole was flexible and depended largely on the time required to reach consensus. Ministerial consultations would include presentations by keynote speakers, panel discussions and six parallel ministerial roundtable meetings for each theme. It was expected that approximately 20 to 30 ministers would participate in each of the roundtable meetings, which would be closed meetings with civil society participation limited to two people each. During the plenary morning meeting of Thursday, 8 February, the facilitators would report on the roundtable meeting outcomes and Government and civil society representatives would have an opportunity to express their views at the feedback panel discussions. The participants would then determine whether any decisions should be elaborated from the findings of the reports. At the Thursday afternoon meeting, the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum would consider decisions elaborated by the Committee of the Whole for possible adoption on Friday, 9 February. In closing, he noted that the Executive Director had advocated a structure for the ministerial consultations at the twenty-fourth session that promoted more interactive discussion and, thereby, greater overall participation of civil society representatives.

43. Some participants inquired whether the nine seats of civil society for the Committee of the Whole sessions would be given to major groups and whether only individuals from those groups would be able to participate in the discussions. Another inquired whether those who would speak for civil society during the ministerial consultations had already been selected. In response, a member of the Committee clarified that the nine seats represented major groups and that it was up to each of them to decide who would represent them; as for the roundtable sessions, it would be up to the Forum participants to decide who would attend each session.

44. It was suggested that the selection of who would attend the various meetings should be based on the agenda, as different organizations within the same area, e.g., environment, had different thematic interests and areas of expertise. One participant expressed concern at the limitation in participation and said that all organizations should be able to intervene freely in the forthcoming session. Another proposed that a more open and flexible system should be used during the sessions of the Committee of the Whole, since only a few organizations would want to talk about each issue. The presenter and others clarified that civil society organizations would be able to rotate people in and out of their seats during the plenary meetings and the meetings of the Committee of the Whole. The ministerial roundtables would be closed to observers, however, and only those participants who had been elected to participate in the discussion would be able to attend. One participant opined that this closed format represented a step backward for civil society.

45. Given that the ministerial roundtables represented a new format to facilitate interaction, one participant wondered whether UNEP had established criteria to determine whether the format had been a success and should be repeated in the future. The presenter noted that the Executive Director wanted the ministerial consultations to be truly interactive more than goal-oriented and that their outcome and success would depend fully on the participants. One participant urged those who would participate in the discussions to truly insist that the decisions adopted would be implemented on the ground.

46. Some participants expressed concern at the limited space in the conference rooms, as it was unlikely that they could accommodate all those who wished to attend as observers. The presenter clarified that all non-seated civil society organizations could attend as observers, but agreed that some technical problems were foreseen given the great number of participants who were expected to attend the meeting.

47. In closing the session, Ms. Fatou Ndoeye, UNEP, reminded participants that a scenario note had been circulated outlining expectations for the new format of the Council/Forum and how civil society could engage in the process.

VI. Session 4: finalizing the messages and the strategy for the twenty-fourth session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum

48. Session 4 featured discussions on the Global Civil Society Statement to be presented to the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its twenty-fourth session. Mr. Al-Sayrafi, of Friends of the Environment, Qatar, a member of the Global Steering Committee, introduced it. He explained that at the Seventh Global Civil Society Forum, held in Dubai in February 2006, an opportunity had been provided to members of each of the civil society topic groups either to emphasize points on topics already included in the Global Civil Society Statement to be presented to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum or to add new ones, subject to the agreement of the Forum as a whole. That experiment had proved to be very successful and would therefore be repeated at the present meeting.

49. During the session, five topics were discussed by five separate working groups, each headed by one or two facilitators. The five topics were water; gender; globalization; chemicals; and war, migration and environment. The facilitators of the working groups, drawn from the members of the Global Steering Committee, were as follows: water – Ms. Nakagawa; gender – Ms. Dorcas Otieno; globalization – Mr. Hammond; chemicals – Ms. Gabizon and Mr. Mahmood Khwaja; and war, migration and environment – Mr. Bispham and Mr. Al-Sayrafi. Participants were invited to choose the groups in which they wished to participate and the groups then deliberated on their topics, following which statements from the groups were presented and discussed in plenary. The final statements, which would be presented to the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its forthcoming session, are set out in annex IV to the present report. The statements are presented as prepared by the working groups, without formal editing.

VII. Session 5: Way forward to engage major groups in the work of UNEP

A. Presentations

50. The Forum participants heard presentations from eight panellists on the way forward to improve the engagement of major groups in the work of UNEP. The panellists were, in the order in which they spoke, Mr. Deleuze, Mr. Hammond, Ms. Neuhaus, Mr. Konrad Otto-Zimmermann of the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives, Mr. Jurg Gerber of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, Mr. L. Royer of the International Trade Union Confederation, Mr. J. Mati of the CIVICUS Alliance for Citizen Participation and Mr. J. Rockström of the Stockholm Environment Institute.

51. Mr. Deleuze highlighted two key issues that were of interest to UNEP, namely, the degree to which civil society organizations were representative of civil society and how regional meetings could become a tool for civil society organizations to track the implementation by Governments of decisions they had adopted at the international level. He alluded as well to three issues that the Executive Director of UNEP had raised for consideration by the Forum, namely whether an environmental index system similar to the human development index used by UNDP might be useful to measure progress, the possibility of organizing stakeholder meetings before each meeting of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum and the possible need for clearer policies for business. It might also be useful to look at processes such as the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, whose rules of procedure allowed for the engagement of a considerable number of non-state actors.

52. Mr. Hammond outlined some of the key issues that had been raised during Saturday's discussions, including how civil society organizations could improve UNEP policy-making processes and the need for better information flows and communication with UNEP. At present, civil society organizations had the opportunity to interact directly with UNEP through four key mechanisms, namely, the global civil society statement, the meeting with the Executive Director of UNEP, input to the ministerial roundtable discussions and input to the plenary discussions. Discussions regarding potential new modalities for engaging major civil society groups in UNEP processes were underway, and he suggested that the enhanced collaboration between civil society and UNEP, among other things, would

ensure that civil society organizations were heard, increase the influence of civil society in policy-making and in the setting of priorities in the environmental agenda, offer an opportunity to collaborate with UNEP and to lobby national Governments that attended sessions of the Council/Forum, improve the visibility of civil society, facilitate the monitoring of the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements and the work of UNEP and improve networking with organizations that followed other major processes.

53. Continuing with the presentation, Ms. Neuhaus said that the engagement of civil society with UNEP could be improved by establishing long-term, rather than project-based, partnerships to strengthen relations at the institutional level; by building partnerships around specific issues, such as climate change or chemicals management; by holding ad hoc meetings of specific major groups on specific issues; by engaging civil society organizations with other divisions of UNEP and its regional offices; and by ensuring that the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building would provide support to civil society groups and not only to Governments. Civil society organizations could improve their engagement by enhancing the transparency and participation of regional meetings, by participating in the drafting of the technical and policy documents of the Governing Council before they had been issued, by ensuring greater communication with the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UNEP, and by strengthening relations with Governments during and after Governing Council meetings. Enhanced involvement of civil society would also require strengthening the regional offices of UNEP to improve its presence in the regions, clearer rules of accreditation of organizations by UNEP, ensuring that major groups represented all sectors and regions and finding ways to increase the resources needed to bring interested actors to Forum meetings and regional consultations.

54. Mr. Otto-Zimmerman made a presentation on the engagement of local authorities in the work of UNEP. He began by noting that the organization which he served as Secretary-General, Local Environment Initiatives or Local Governments for Sustainability, was founded with the intention of supporting the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements and agenda 21 at the local level. He stressed the importance of participants to the present meeting – environmentalists one and all – seeing each other as allies. UNEP was a strong ally with a significant positive global reputation whose support lent credibility to programmes, activities and events undertaken by local governments and was often seen as an anchor of hope. He expressed the view that local government could be important strategic allies to UNEP and that the relationship between them would be mutually beneficial. A more structured relationship between local authorities and regional offices was desirable and increased interaction between UNEP and relevant groupings of mayors or experts in local policy implementation might be one positive outcome of such a relationship. He noted that UNEP had already proved to be extremely helpful in facilitating the involvement of cities from the South in the activities of the organization. In conclusion, he noted that national committees in many countries did not allow for sufficient local government participation and suggested that simple instruments such as memorandums of understanding were useful tools in defining roles, relationships and joint work in partnerships.

55. In his presentation, Mr. Gerber, Chief Operating Officer of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, underscored that businesses were now aiming for sustainable patterns of production and consumption and intended to make efficient provision of goods and services that people wanted while minimizing pollution. He lauded the progress made by UNEP to date in engaging major groups and stakeholders and he encouraged the integration of civil society groups in a more structured, efficient representative way to ensure transparency of activities, in particular at the level of the Global Civil Society Steering Committee. He suggested that in the future time should be allowed for the submission of comments prior to the finalization of the global civil society statement and he urged UNEP to make innovative use of communication technologies to ensure the inclusiveness of civil society groups. Stressing the value of ensuring a strong civil society process at the global level, he said that the use of global available standards and global agreed language through tools such as the ISO standards or the Global Compact would be key in that regard.

56. Mr. Royer said that his organization had the mandate to pursue alliances with civil society and wanted to engage with UNEP to enhance those alliances and to engage in environmental protection on the ground; it focused primarily on its one-hundred-and-sixty-million members and on the role they could play in protecting the environment in the workplace and within their communities. Some of the barriers that had been encountered included a shortage in training and education of workers and trade union leaders, resistance of employers to promoting real worker participation, resistance of Governments to making the workplace a field of environmental action rather than a field of unilateral corporate decision-making and deficiencies at the local level to connect with civil society actors. The further engagement of civil society would not start from zero, he said, as models had already been developed that could be used as examples. The links between UNEP branches and regional offices and

labour regional bodies needed improvement, however; the focus of those links should be the training and education of workers, trade union leaders and employers on environmental issues and the promotion of dialogue between labour organizations and other civil social actors and between employers and trade unions and Governments. Regarding accreditation, the key for trade union organizations was not so much how many of them got accredited but how much space was allocated to worker and trade union issues in environmental forums. He suggested that the regional consultation processes could help identify barriers and challenges in engaging in action and urged consideration of transition measures and specific steps to protect workers in the implementation of environmental agreements and targets.

57. Mr. Mati, Research Associate, World Alliance for Citizen Participation, noted that the Alliance was a global civil society network that accommodated all forms of civil society organizations and aimed to advance the interests of civil society and, first and foremost, enable the participation of citizens in the processes of governance and development. The Alliance included a participatory governance programme and a civil society watch programme, which was its flagship programme and had the objective of enabling the engagement of civil society organization leaders. He expressed his appreciation of the fact that UNEP and the United Nations system was seeking to engage civil society in its work and he underscored the importance of the opportunity to influence policy. The fact that members of civil society were participating in the Global Civil Society Forum with others to whom they were ideologically opposed provided a unique opportunity for them to try to understand each other's viewpoints and reach a common ground. He suggested that civil society should be engaged further in other United Nations forums, should monitor and exert pressure on Governments to ensure they honoured their commitments to decisions adopted by the Governing Council, and should assume the role of avenue of communication between UNEP or Governments on the one hand and the grass-roots level that they represented on the other.

58. Mr. Rockström, Executive Director of the Stockholm Environment Institute, described what he called the creeping and fragmented change that had characterized the global response to environmental challenges over the previous fifty years. During the last five years, he said, a greater understanding of the earth had been attained and there were clear indications that the world faced fundamental changes on a planetary scale in the next 25 to 30 years. He expressed concern that participants at meetings such as the present forum were merely "rearranging chairs on the Titanic" as environmental degradation continued unabated. The scientific and research community was raising a red flag that profound lifestyle and policy changes were now required of the global population in order to face up to the challenge of sustainable development. The new sense of urgency translated to a need to redefine sustainability and to find new ways for civil society engagement. At present, UNEP was the only global organization addressing global environmental governance. It was therefore vital that civil society, including scientists, engage effectively to guide the work of the organization. New types of partnerships were required between scientists, who had traditionally worked in isolation, and the development community, including implementing agencies, non-governmental organizations and the business community.

59. Also during this session, Mr. Najib Saab, Secretary General of the newly formed Arab Forum for Environment and Development, provided an overview of the Forum. The founding board of trustees of the Forum had met in June 2006 in Beirut and had agreed on the structure of the body, which had then been set up over the following months. The Forum had become a recognized international non-governmental organization comprising experts from civil society, non-governmental organizations, the business community and the media, and also admitted government agencies as observers. Although the work of the Forum would focus mainly on Arab States, it would seek international cooperation and would undertake some work in other parts of the world. The main product of the Forum would be an annual state of the environment report, which would provide the civil society view of the state of the environment in the Arab region. The report aimed, among other things, to evaluate the progress of Arab States in fulfilling their commitments to international conventions and global environmental endeavours. Other activities of the Forum would cover topics such as corporate environmental responsibility; environmental awareness and communication; environmental education, legislation, governance; combating desertification and waste management. The Forum would be financed through contributions to its trust fund, sponsorship and income from activities.

B. Discussion

60. In the ensuing discussion, one participant said that civil society organizations would not be able to engage internationally unless they engaged with their own Governments. Another stressed that they needed to reach out to their constituencies, as Governments often doubted whether they truly

represented civil society. One participant stressed the importance of the dialogue between researchers, community members and decision makers to achieve sustainable fishing. The need was also stressed for improved links with the Committee of Permanent Representatives of UNEP. A member of the Global Steering Committee said that the Committee was preparing a document addressing the issue of how it could become more representative and called on interested organizations to provide input into the process. Mr. Hammond said that the Global Steering Committee had taken note of the comments presented to improve the Committee's composition and proceedings and hoped that it would be more representative by the next Forum.

61. It was suggested that the Forum should look at what had been done on the ground to encourage partnerships among civil society actors. In response, Mr. Mati said that CIVICUS had developed the civil society index, which constituted a useful tool for assessing the state of civil society in various countries, noting that it could be used as a model to be emulated at the grassroots level. Implementation, however, took place at the local level. Mr. Röckstrom noted that the Stockholm Environment Institute was in the process of setting up a partnership with UNEP on adaptation to climate change at the local and national levels. Mr. Otto-Zimmermann suggested that implementation was always local and that partnerships could only work with clear regulations and clear governance structures. Mr. Gerber said that there should be stronger links between local government organizations and other civil society groups to form a stronger force and that local governments should engage more actively with the regional offices and regional work of UNEP and build links with national committees.

62. Regarding the suggestion that civil society organizations hold ad hoc meetings on specific issues, one participant inquired how this could be promoted and suggested that UNEP establish education and training programmes for civil society organizations to facilitate their participation in such meetings. In response, Ms. Neuhaus said that, although it represented a challenge, UNEP structures could be used to bring civil society actors together on particular issues, as had been demonstrated by the meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity recently held in Brazil, where a parallel civil society forum had been organized and the concerns of many social movements and grassroots organizations had been brought to the core of the discussions.

63. One participant inquired whether the International Trade Union Confederation was implementing the Global Compact and whether it had taken any steps to reconcile "green employment" with job losses. Mr. Royer responded that his organization had signed the Global Compact, but its principles had often been translated into formulations of corporate social responsibility which could not be verified and remained largely disconnected from local and global environmental targets. The key challenge was to use the infrastructure of trade unions to support the implementation of environmental targets.

64. In response to a question regarding the nature of the engagement of the Stockholm Environment Institute with other civil society actors, Mr. Röckstrom said that it sought to engage in partnerships with research organizations; the complexity of the climate change issue, for instance, required input from different areas of expertise. The key, he said, was to link researchers and local non-governmental organizations.

65. Several participants expressed their gratitude to Mr. Michael Koech and the Committee for their preparatory work for the present meeting.

66. One participant representing indigenous fishing interests underscored the importance of engaging indigenous peoples, who harboured a wealth of traditional knowledge. He urged UNEP to "be indigenous" and to base its activities on indigenous knowledge systems. He said that fishing communities had a natural right to their environment but that they had not always exercised responsible stewardship. This had led to the depletion of a common resource, a "tragedy of the commons" brought about by free access and unrestricted demand for a finite resource.

67. Another participant lauded the formation of the Arab Forum for Environment and Development and suggested that similar initiatives should be undertaken in other regions

68. Several participants noted their opposition to the production of a consensus global civil society statement, describing it as an impossible task considering the variety of views held by different civil society groups. One participant underscored the fact that her organization had been vocal in opposing the elaboration of a consensus statement since 2001 and suggested that instead of spending precious time on the statement, better use might be made of the two-day Forum if it were devoted to discussion of substantive matters and exchange of views. A number of participants suggested that major groups should make separate statements to the Governing Council. Several participants, however, stressed the

value of producing a common statement as, among other things, it built consensus within the group and provided a common civil society position.

69. A number of participants pointed to the importance of the regional consultation meetings and several called for the process for selecting participants to be more transparent. One suggested that UNEP held a comparative advantage for the engagement of civil society at the regional level but felt that it was not doing enough at present and that its work to that end should be extended, including through the use of specific timelines and indicators. Several other participants pointed to the need for targets and indicators on civil society engagement with UNEP, as there had been, as one participant described it, a “glacial pace of change” to date. One participant expressed her surprise that none of the civil society regional meetings had addressed the themes for the Governing Council for 2007 of “United Nations reform” as this topic would have a significant impact on civil society engagement.

70. Other issues raised by individuals included the importance of appointing regional focal points for each of the major groups; the effect that capacity-building and technology transfer, including through the Bali Strategic Plan on Technology Transfer and Capacity-building, would have on civil society participation; the relevance of the UNEP programme of work; the use of memorandums of understanding as a valuable tool for partnerships; the need to strengthen the representation of indigenous peoples at the Forum and on the Steering Committee; the need for greater transparency in elaborating the agendas of meetings of the Governing Council of UNEP and the Commission on Sustainable Development and the need for greater complementarity between them; the need to improve synergies among the environmental index and human development and civil society indexes and state of nations reports, among others.

71. In the closing remarks made by the panel, Mr. Hammond said he agreed that there was a need to measure progress, including in the work of the Steering Committee. In response to the surprise expressed by one participant at the representation on the Steering Committee of intergovernmental organizations, he noted that he had raised the matter strenuously with UNEP but had been encouraged to participate as the World Conservation Union (IUCN) had considerable experience in managing networks and working with civil society. Mr. Royer emphasized that the trade union movement was serious in its intent to form alliances with civil society at the international and national levels. Mr. Otto-Zimmerman confirmed that Local Governments for Sustainability did indeed reach out to the South through its regional secretariats, with approximately 120 to 150 local government members in developing countries. Mr. Gerber noted that a window of opportunity existed to set up a structure and define its processes for greater civil society engagement. Mr. Rockström expressed the hope that the twenty-fourth session of the Council/Forum would focus on how to govern the environment for sustainable development. He agreed with suggestions that had been made by participants that civil society should set goals for UNEP and he suggested that there was power in presenting civil society to UNEP in unconventional relationships. Mr. Mati advocated the elaboration of a common global civil society statement that reflected compromise rather than consensus and underscored the need for tools for assessing the environment and managing it for development. Ms. Neuhaus also supported the use of a common statement to establish a basic common civil society position.

VIII. Session 6: Dialogue session on globalization, ecosystem services and human well-being between representatives of business and industry, local authorities, indigenous people and their communities and government representatives

72. Mr. Michael Koech opened session 6, a panel and open dialogue concerning globalization, ecosystem services and human well-being with business and industry, local authorities, indigenous people and their communities and Government representatives. He called on Mr. Ross Van Horn, Island Resources Foundation, to moderate the panel presentations and discussion.

73. Mr. Van Horn briefly framed the discussion, noting the global interconnectivity of ecosystems, and he cited the increased desertification near Beijing in relation to the local fishing industry as an example. The path of least resistance entailed the risk of the “Azola effect,” in which disempowered peoples suffered heightened sensitivity to adverse environmental impacts. He encouraged discussions on active steps to improve the environment in the context of globalization and the need to protect human well-being and ecosystem services.

74. Mr. Walter Lindner, Ambassador of Germany in Kenya, speaking on behalf of the Minister of the Environment of Germany, emphasized the opportunity for positive change on environmental issues in the coming year. Pointing out that Kenya was experiencing desertification and the loss of alpine snow cover and that Germany had just witnessed its warmest winter on record, he said that it was too late to prevent many aspects of climate change, which was already under way. With new leadership in the posts of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Executive Director of UNEP and the chair of the European Union, however, there was a fresh opportunity to make environmental progress and achieve a breakthrough in public awareness. He urged participants not to rest after their speeches but to come with ideas and have an open mind for a renewed dialogue.

75. Ms. D. Abdel Motaal, World Trade Organization (WTO), discussed the environmental agenda from the trade perspective. By affecting the flow of goods and resources, trade and globalization were inherently linked to the environment; this relationship was further reinforced by the emergence of the global information economy. Since its founding in 1995, WTO had examined the relationship between the environment and trade and had maintained a standing committee focused on the environment. With three-quarters of its membership consisting of developing countries, however, trade discussions had been focused on income growth rather than environmental protection. The framework for trade negotiations was being revisited, with increased awareness of environmental challenges, particularly climate change. A second tension involved differences among industrial countries on the scientific basis, technological solutions and preferred approaches to addressing environmental issues. An emerging dialogue was focused on how global trade might help rather than hurt the environment. Partnerships with UNEP, multilateral environmental agreements and other institutions were critical for that discussion to proceed, as WTO was principally an organization focused on trade rather than the environment.

76. Noting that the mission of WTO was to maintain an open and equitable multilateral framework for trade, she further observed that trade might lead to a more efficient global allocation of resources. Citing Egypt as an example, she pointed out that that water-scarce country imported rather than produced water-intensive crops such as rice and was therefore able to conserve its water resources for other uses. Trade could also harm the environment, however, if externalities were not factored into the prices of traded goods. For example, if the cost to the environment of sea-going ships that dumped oil or toxic chemicals while carrying goods between countries was not factored into the prices of those goods, then such trade would entail greater environmental harm than good. Delays in enacting environmental measures and poor coordination among environmental institutions were challenges facing international trade in promoting sustainable development. Trade conventions could support an improved environment through, for example, the removal of harmful regulations such as subsidies for inefficient fisheries and it was important for trade and environment policies to proceed in tandem. The current question concerning trade and the environment asked how measures for environmental protection might promote rather than obstruct trade. Similarly, decisions by WTO to disallow environmental regulations that served only to restrict trade helped the environmental community by ensuring the integrity and preventing abuse of measures for environmental protection. She concluded her remarks by noting that the attendance of the director general of WTO at the forthcoming twenty-fourth session of the Governing Council of UNEP indicated the importance of environmental issues to international trade.

77. Ms. Esther Camac, of the Ixacavaa Association of Indigenous Development and Information (Asociación Ixacavaa de Desarrollo e Información Indígena), provided a perspective of indigenous peoples on environmental issues. She described four principles that could form a framework for a sustainable relationship between humanity and the environment: respect for life and all people on mother earth; appreciation for the home that humanity had inherited from previous generations and had to be preserved for future generations; a responsibility to take care of mother earth; and an obligation to return to mother earth all that she had given. That conceptual framework, based on traditional knowledge, had been presented in the participatory review process for the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. The major question, she said, was how to define human well-being and ecosystem services. If these were to be determined solely by economic criteria, the essence of which was the profit motive, then human politics, society and relationships would be deprived of broader values. There was an important distinction between the concepts of lifestyle, which was determined by artificial consumption criteria, and quality of life, which encompassed the importance of life and an understanding of one's duties to as well as resources received from the earth. In that regard, the Human Development Index contradicted indigenous values and instead focused on quality of life from a developed country model. By contrast, an indigenous perspective emphasized the importance of living as part of the earth and that living well involved understanding one's roots in terms of both the gifts and needs of the earth. She concluded by requesting UNEP and the civil society representatives to accept a responsibility to protect

and give back to the earth as part of a life-focused model rather than through a consumption-oriented approach.

78. Mr. Otto-Zimmermann discussed the roles of local governments in the issues of globalization and the environment. He said that local governments dealt most directly with the impacts of globalization and environmental change because those governments had the most direct relationships with their citizens, through both the provision of basic services and their responsiveness to local concerns. The recent IPCC report had noted that a rise in sea levels would impact coastal communities, including most of the large cities of the world. Simultaneously, climate change might also deprive land-locked communities of water resources. Citizens of affected communities would look first to their local governments for assistance rather than the United Nations or other international bodies. Linked with globalization was the process of urbanization, in which people, resources, knowledge and talent were increasingly clustered in mega-cities while small towns and hinterlands suffered from the loss of resources.

79. In response to the challenges of environmental change and globalization, he continued, local governments were forming associations that spanned borders. For example, a group of cities accounting for 27 per cent of global carbon dioxide emissions had together established targets and means of cooperating to meet those targets. Local governments recognized the need for concerted local action and were therefore consulting and cooperating with each other. Prime issues facing local governments included the lack of control over resources, the increasing demands of urban lifestyles and the lack of a local government voice in international environmental dialogues. Many large cities had populations greater than many member States, but unlike those States, the local governments did not have a voice in the discussion. He concluded by describing a proposal in which local associations of citizens would exercise significant decision-making authority over resources and basic services, without interference from national Governments or transnational organizations, and asking whether national and international bodies would find such an arrangement acceptable.

80. Mr. Jürg Gerber, World Business Council for Sustainable Development, a coalition of 190 multinational corporations whose products and services reach over half of the world's population, spoke on the role of business in environmental issues. He noted the interconnections between economic and environmental issues and said that there was a strong business case for protecting and restoring ecosystem services that supported human activities. The primary question concerning globalization and the environment was not whether the net impact was good or bad but, rather, how to harness the process of globalization for environmental good. Globalization was not simply a top-down phenomenon. Local capacities, resources and bottom-up initiatives were also important if environmental objectives were to be achieved. Finally, noting that environmental issues were not part of the routine business agenda, he observed that his organization and others were working together to prepare reports on environmental issues in language accessible to the business community.

81. During the ensuing discussion, a number of representatives raised concerns or questions on a range of themes. The relationship between trade, globalization and the environment, and the need to resolve the tension that existed between the World Trade Organization and multilateral environmental agreements, were identified as key issues. The need for greater transparency in World Trade Organization procedures was also mentioned. Other representatives stressed the importance of prioritizing human health and welfare and the rights of workers, which could be negatively impacted by trade. Examples cited of the negative impacts of trade included the continued production and export of asbestos and the use of farmland in developing countries to grow biofuel crops primarily for consumption in developed countries. One representative expressed concern that UNEP was increasingly adopting market-based environmental policies that neglected the social dimension. Means by which sustainability principles could be brought to the core of the activities of multinational corporations were also discussed as was the degree to which they would submit to legally binding rather than voluntary instruments.

82. Some representatives spoke of the link between climate change, the environment and migration, including rural-urban migration and its associated problems. Finally, some representatives spoke of the need for increased awareness raising and education so that environmental issues receive greater prominence in the international agenda.

83. The panellists responded to a number of the issues raised.

84. Ms. Abdel Motaal said that the Doha round of trade talks was addressing a number of areas of concern, including agricultural subsidies. Acknowledging the tension between trade and environmental concerns, she said Governments could do more to assist coherence by adopting consistent national

positions in the various forums. As for transparency in WTO deliberations, it was subject to the agreement of the parties involved and the increasing trend of Governments to allow open discussion was welcomed. Turning to the question of labour rights, she said that WTO did not stand in the way of countries protecting their own labour, but the situation was more complicated when countries took steps to protect labour in other countries. It was also often the case that developing countries were wary of discussions on labour standards in case their comparative advantages were threatened.

85. Ms. Camac spoke of the need to reinvest a fair proportion of the benefits of ecosystem services in the ecosystems that provided the services and the communities inhabiting those ecosystems.

86. Mr. Otto-Zimmermann, speaking on migration, said that urban migration often resulted from the fact that countries had failed to implement effective strategies for supporting rural communities as key components of a multi-polar spatial structure. It was important, he said, to establish governance structures to make slums more manageable, working with community leaders to build neighbourhoods with gradually improving economies. The UN-Habitat database, he added, contained several examples of good practices in this respect.

87. Mr. Lindner, on the issue of raising the profile of the environment in Government deliberations, pointed out that in any country the environment minister was one of a number of ministers vying for funding. It was therefore important to raise public awareness of environmental issues through the media and to ensure that environmental issues were cross-cutting within the United Nations family. Regarding the production and export of such substances as asbestos, he said standards were very high and legislation strict within the European Union, though it was still difficult to control private exports.

88. Mr. Gerber noted the importance of education and capacity-building in the private sector; for example, companies could do more to educate their employees in recycling issues. That in turn required consideration of the robustness of implementation systems for regulations and whether they were binding or voluntary. In addition, a more flexible approach to system boundaries was needed, for example in the case of river basins. Multinational companies had a major role to play in developing innovative approaches conducive to sustainable development. Regarding the use of land and water resources for biofuel rather than food, he acknowledged the difficulty of a situation in which such resources were drawn to a product that had higher economic value and suggested that science had a role to play in finding answers to the problem.

IX. Dialogue with Mr. Achim Steiner, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme

89. On the afternoon of the first day of the Forum a dialogue took place between the Forum participants and Mr. Achim Steiner, Executive Director of UNEP. Mr. Steiner commenced the dialogue with an introductory statement in which he thanked the participants for enriching what he said would be an important week for UNEP and the environment agenda. It was urgent, he said, that UNEP, the greater United Nations system and civil society talk to one another about how best to encourage the international community to move the environment and sustainability agenda forward. He said that the recent prominence of climate change in the media indicated that global environmental and sustainability issues had finally become an important component of policies and strategies at the international level and that that increased the responsibility of environmentalists, including environment ministers meeting in the Global Ministerial Environment Forum in the coming week, for formulating clear responses to those issues.

90. The barriers to that process, and to the engagement of civil society, included the continued existence of outdated formal structures. UNEP, in the context of overall United Nations reform, was accordingly seeking to establish a more productive relationship with civil society that recognized that civil society could add significant value to the work of UNEP and other organizations; it was more than political symbolism that the heads of several United Nations bodies would be attending the current session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum.

91. Although in some countries the environment portfolio was considered of central importance, in others it was still viewed as marginal. New institutional and governance frameworks were therefore needed to enable environment ministers to contribute effectively where issues of the environment, sustainability and equity were concerned. Nevertheless, the global debate on the environment was widening and its place on the political agenda was becoming ever more central. That was of course good news but paradoxically posed a risk that environmentalists might become marginalized. In conclusion, he reiterated the need for UNEP to take advantage of the potential of civil society to play a

major role in that process and he invited the business community in particular to view UNEP as a platform from which it could become increasingly integrated into activities that helped solve global environmental problems.

92. In the ensuing discussion, a number of representatives raised issues to which Mr. Steiner responded. In the first round of questions they related to the World Social Forum and the possibility of an alternative forum; the efficiency of UNEP in achieving concrete results; the role of trade unions; the issue of gender; the degree of participation of civil society in the Global Ministerial Environment Forum in the coming week; and building capacity in UNEP so that it could work more effectively with civil society and other partners.

93. Mr. Steiner said the issue of an alternative to the World Social Forum was related to such questions as its effectiveness and its impact on public policy. He expressed regret that UNEP as an institution had not been invited to the recent World Social Forum. The oversight had represented a missed opportunity on both sides and improved modes of engagement needed to be looked at in future. On the practical impact of UNEP, he agreed that more concrete action was required and he saw the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building as part of the process of making UNEP more action oriented. To achieve that, however, more support was needed, in which civil society had a role to play. On trade unions, he noted their presence at the current meeting and had recently discussed with trade union leaders the concept of green jobs and their potential role in environmental sustainability.

94. He acknowledged that there was much room for improvement within UNEP on the matter of gender. He was about to appoint to the strategy implementation team a gender adviser as part of the attempt to bring more gender equity into the way the institution worked. He noted the dissatisfaction among civil society representatives at the limited possibilities for actual involvement of civil society in the ministerial negotiations during the coming week, but drew attention to the physical limitations of the space available. Efforts were being made to give civil society an adequate voice, while recognizing that ministers needed a full opportunity to engage in their own inter-ministerial discussions. Finally, on the issue of capacity-building in the creation of partnerships, he said that UNEP was reviewing collaborative instruments to see how it might best work with non-governmental organizations and was scaling up reform in that area.

95. In the second round of questions, issues raised related to ecosystem services; lack of involvement of indigenous peoples in decision-making processes; conflict and the environment; government accountability; and the strategic presence of UNEP.

96. Mr. Steiner said that UNEP recognized that utilization of ecosystem services could be complicated where issues of land tenure and traditional rights of access were involved. Restoration of ecosystems was of high global priority, given the role of ecosystems in poverty reduction and livelihoods. UNEP had also tried to be cognizant of the fact that the concerns of indigenous peoples were often distinct from those of other stakeholders and was continuing to develop an understanding of how best to engage with member States in a way that the concerns of indigenous peoples were accommodated, though that often touched on complex issues of sovereignty.

97. As regards conflict and the environment, he said that UNEP had a successful record of responding to emergencies in cooperation with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. In response to a question, he defended the role of UNEP in a clean-up of oil-polluted areas in Nigeria, pointing out that its role in such circumstances was primarily to help affected people in what was a politically complex situation.

98. On the issue of government accountability, he observed that several recent reports had assessed environmental performance at the national level. Whether UNEP should build on them to capture how countries were moving forward in their implementation commitments was a matter for discussion. Finally, regarding the strategic presence of UNEP, he said that increased country-level engagement would soon eat up any extra resources that might be available. UNEP worked successfully with and through UNDP and other partners at the country level, but was looking at its regional office structure to see how it might more effectively engage with a wider range of partners.

99. In conclusion, the Chair thanked Mr. Steiner on behalf of the Civil Society Forum for taking part in the dialogue and sharing his vision for UNEP and urged the Forum participants to take the opportunity to support and contribute to the reform process that UNEP was undergoing.

X. Discussions with the bureau of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum

100. Owing to time limitations, the discussion to take place under the present item between the Global Civil Society Forum and the Bureau of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum could not take place as scheduled. It was instead held during the twenty-fourth session of the Council/Forum. No record of the discussion is available.

XI. Other matters

101. The Forum took up no other matters.

XII. Closure of the Forum

102. Mr. Koech opened the closing session at 6:00 pm on Sunday, 4 February 2007, by inviting remarks from Ms. Sylvia Masese, African Council for Communication Education, and Mr. Deleuze.

103. In her statement, Ms. Masese noted her appreciation for the opportunity to host the Forum. Describing global efforts to improve the environment as a common journey, she said that partnerships involving civil society, non-governmental organizations and Governments were crucial. The contributions made at the present Forum would inform discussions and decisions at the forthcoming meeting of the Governing Council of UNEP.

104. Mr. Deleuze thanked the representatives of civil society for their participation and urged that the pace of discussions be accelerated. Noting that the Forum was the basis for further dialogue with the Governing Council of UNEP and with the Global Ministerial Environment Forum, he emphasized the need for continued engagement of civil society in the environmental work of UNEP.

105. In his closing remarks, Mr. Koech expressed his honour to have served as chair of the Forum as well as his appreciation to all participants for their work. Noting that UNEP was specialized in different functional areas, he said that it was to be expected that the various members of civil society would also have different perspectives on environmental issues. Civil society and UNEP were closely bound together, both in the support of UNEP for civil society engagement as well as in the fruitful selection of the UNEP Executive Director from the ranks of civil society. UNEP relied on the dynamism of civil society in its work, and the past thirty years of close interaction and partnership had confirmed the natural alliance between UNEP and civil society, as envisioned by the Governing Council of UNEP in decision SS/VII.5. The challenge was to ensure that Governments and UNEP took on board the recommendations of civil society and to increase the impact of ideas from the present Forum on the UNEP programme of work. Noting the considerable preparatory activity over the preceding months, he concluded by saying that collective efforts would continue to be indispensable for the betterment of the planet's environment.

106. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the Chair declared the eighth Global Civil Society Forum closed at 6.30 p.m. on Sunday, 4 February 2007.

Annex I

Global civil society statement, prepared by the Global Steering Committee for the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its twenty-fourth session

Introduction

The present statement has been prepared by the Global Steering Committee for the twenty-fourth session of the United Nations Environment Programme's Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, to be held in February 2007 in Nairobi, Kenya. The statement¹ is the product of harmonizing discussions that took place across six regional civil society consultation processes convened by UNEP between 9 October and 10 November 2006. Each of the six consultations resulted in a regional statement², which should be considered independently and in support of the present global statement. The global statement contains observations and recommendations related to four areas on the agenda of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum: globalization, ecosystem services and human well-being; gender and environment; water and environment; and chemicals management. Outside of these four areas, the Global Steering Committee also wishes to draw attention to a number of overarching aims that it believes the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum should bear in mind during its deliberations at its twenty-fourth session. They are listed below.

The Global Steering Committee would like to thank the staff of the UNEP Major Groups and Stakeholders Branch and the UNEP regional offices for their ongoing efforts in support of the work of the Committee and in the preparation of the present statement.

Overarching aims

The Global Steering Committee urges the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum to bear in mind during its deliberations at its twenty-fourth session the following overarching aims:

- (a) To promote sustainable production and consumption patterns, particularly those which promote environmentally sustainable and affordable energy sources;
- (b) To ensure, wherever possible, open access to environmental data and information and full participation of all major groups and stakeholders in key decision-making processes that affect the environment;
- (c) To support effective implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building as an implementing framework for the recommendations contained herein, including capacity-building and technology transfer where appropriate.;
- (d) To encourage effective public education and participation regarding the principles of sustainable development and the integration of environment into development decision-making. United Nations policies on public participation, including those based on multi-stakeholder processes, social equity, and the major group concept, should be made mandatory. The Governing Council should facilitate further the establishment and strengthening of national multi-stakeholder councils on sustainable development;
- (e) To promote system-wide coherence in the implementation of the present recommendations within the United Nations;

1 Civil society participants strove for consensus in reaching our conclusions. Nonetheless, this statement should not be interpreted as meaning that every member of the Global Steering Committee, or civil society organization, necessarily endorses every point contained in the statement.

2 The six statements will be made available as documents UNEP/GC/24/INF/10/Add.1–Add.6.

(f) To ensure that gender equality and youth involvement are recognized as overarching issues of importance for the successful implementation of the UNEP programme of work and the present recommendations;

(g) To engage with the private sector, key private sector associations, trade unions and the UNEP Division of Technology, Industry, and Economics in the implementation of the present recommendations;

(h) To recognize the primary role of the state in relation to all aspects of environmental protection and sustainable development. States should respect the harmony of ecosystems and the role they play in the provision of key services and human health and should involve all stakeholders at every stage of policy planning and all decision-making processes. Within this context, States should particularly respect the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities. Moreover, States should ensure that the polluter pays principle is enforced.

I. Globalization, ecosystem services, and human well-being

A. Issues

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment clearly illustrated that the ability of the Earth's natural systems to provide key services is declining in almost all areas and has been significantly degraded in numerous terrestrial and marine ecosystems – with a high probability that similar trends will continue over the next 50 years. This situation has increasingly severe implications for human well-being across the world, particularly for the poor.

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment offers the international community a new decision-making framework that highlights the dependence of social and economic goals on ecosystems. That framework underscores the increasing interdependence of societies in a globalized world and the importance of valuing ecosystem services for the achievement of poverty reduction, climate stabilization, and the Millennium Development Goals.

Members of the Global Civil Society Forum note that the process of globalization affects all aspects of the subject areas under consideration on the agenda of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum. Globalization is a multi-dimensional phenomenon with both positive (e.g., advances in technology, health and access to information) and negative (e.g., unsustainable resource exploitation, a larger gap between rich and poor and loss of culture) impacts. Through the expansion of globalization, many multinational companies have exacerbated the destruction, contamination and over-exploitation of natural resources in developing countries. Some groups and regions of the world bear a disproportionate part of the costs of globalization (e.g., Africa, women, indigenous people and the poor) while other regions, and the people that inhabit them, benefit disproportionately (e.g., North America and Europe). Globalization has also increased the wealth gap between nations and within nations.

An important aspect of globalization is the inter-relationship between international financial institutions, private financing sources and United Nations environmental standard-setting and policy-making processes. Commercial banks have not adequately integrated the latter into their activities and decision-making processes.

Major drivers directly affecting progress in ameliorating the impacts of globalization on ecosystem services and human well-being include good governance, respect for basic human and labor rights, equity and transparency.

B. Recommendations

UNEP should strive to ensure that the key findings of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment are effectively incorporated into all relevant development decision-making processes – particularly those of finance ministries and the business community; the Global Steering Committee would like the Assessment's conceptual framework to reach far beyond the environmental community and to engage all sectors of society and thereby facilitate effective partnerships.

Global and regional institutions and processes governing trade practices, such as the World Trade Organization, are essential elements of globalization. There is an urgent need to ensure coherence between these institutions and multilateral environmental agreements in order to ensure that global trade practices, particularly global commodity trading, do not undermine initiatives supporting the sustainability of ecosystem services. Governments should make it clear that the World Trade Organization does not have a mandate to set rules that may in any way define or restrict the national implementation of measures in support of multilateral environmental agreements. The Global Steering Committee calls for the development of mechanisms to ensure compliance with decisions taken under multilateral environmental agreement, including dispute settlement.

Policies of United Nations bodies, international financial institutions, international trade institutions and other such institutions should be rigorously evaluated to determine whether they fully address current environmental challenges and sustainable development. Such an evaluation could incorporate, among other things, fully accounting for the cost of development impacts on the environment and approaches to adequately measuring the sustainability of economic development. There should also be support for a comprehensive strategy on finance—redirecting international financial institutions and their funds to sustainable development, particularly sustainable energy sources, renewables and energy efficiency.

Steps should be taken to ensure that national export credit agencies comply with the policies adopted or decisions taken by multilateral environmental agreements, do not promote unsustainable energy production and furthermore reflect the findings and recommendations of key reports such as the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, those of the World Commission on Dams and others.

Policies and actions that include ecosystem services should be mainstreamed into economic considerations and decision-making across all sectors, both private and public. Ecosystem services should be fully integrated into national accounting systems. UNEP should play a facilitating role in the development and ongoing improvement of ecosystem services assessment tools for quantifying ecosystem service dependence (and impacts) in business operations and public sector investments. Steps must be taken to explore opportunities to link financing mechanisms with efforts that support the restoration, maintenance and enhancement of ecosystem services.

UNEP, in order to leverage economic valuation and positively influence decision-making, should work to ensure coherence between existing economic and analytical studies on the valuation of ecosystem services, particularly in pricing and national accounting systems, including mechanisms which consider other criteria such as ecosystem-regulating, spiritual, and cultural services.

UNEP should facilitate access to best practices and lessons learned in areas such as ecosystem valuation and the role of ecosystems in buffering natural disasters, or as a key foundation for development, in order to build awareness and promote integration of ecosystem service considerations into public and private sector decision-making.

UNEP should engage all sectors of society, particularly financial institutions, the private sector and inter-governmental organizations, in order to bridge the frequent disconnect between ecosystem services and development and to develop compelling arguments for incorporating ecosystem service considerations into decision-making, policy development, education and common understanding.

UNEP is well positioned to bring together national Governments, international organizations such as the World Bank and non-governmental and other civil society institutions to build educational awareness and develop an implementation strategy in response to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. The Global Civil Society Forum urges the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum to confer the resources necessary for UNEP to play this role effectively.

UNEP and the member States of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum should support relevant ministries (e.g., finance and development) with key valuation tools to guide the preparation of their country assistance strategies, poverty reduction strategy papers and the development of similar economic policies.

II. Gender and environment

A. Issues

We understand gender as the reflection of socio-cultural relationships between women and men. Gender, environment and sustainable development are linked in many different ways. Women and men contribute differently to environmental policy, decision-making, management and education. Women and men are differently affected by environmental problems. Gender inequality is one of the most persistent inequalities in the world, as stated in recent reports by the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank. Gender equity is key to the eradication of poverty and sustainable development.

Women play key roles in managing and using the environment as demonstrated in numerous United Nations documents including Agenda 21, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 1995) and the African Environment Outlook 2002.

Women and their concerns are underrepresented in decision-making and there is a dearth of strategies to ensure women's participation in policy formulation, planning and decision-making on sustainable development. Furthermore, women lack access to and control over resources at the local level and there is a lack of attention to local-global linkages.

Women and a gender perspective are underrepresented in environment research and training and there is a lack of gender-specific information, data and research in sustainable development. Women's organizations – natural allies in this process – are often unaware of the gender impacts of environmental policies.

Gender and UNEP

To accomplish its mission of providing leadership and encouraging partnerships in caring for the environment, UNEP must achieve gender equality in all of its policies, programmes and practices.

We commend UNEP for the appointment of a senior gender advisor and believe that this is a critical first step.

We commend the post-conflict assessment work of UNEP, for example the environmental consideration of human displacement in Liberia, which was viewed from a gender perspective.

We note with appreciation the efforts and changes being made in UNEP to implement Governing Council decision 23/11, in particular the adoption of a gender plan of action. We call on UNEP to implement the gender plan of action fully, both in its internal and external policies.

Efforts to implement decision 23/11 are, however, lacking in many instances at the country level. It is not only a question of resources, but also of ineffective work on networking, encouragement, the building of political support and partnerships.

We applaud the ongoing work by the UNEP Division of Early Warning and Assessment in developing an "Environment and Conflict Prevention" initiative whose aim is to coordinate and stimulate efforts to promote conflict prevention, peace and cooperation through activities, policies and actions related to environmental protection, restoration and resources. We urge governments fully to support the continuation of this process. We strongly recommend that gender perspectives be entrenched in this initiative.

We are concerned, however, that the outcomes of the WAVE Conference (Women as the Voice for the Environment, which took place in October 2004 in Nairobi, Kenya) have not been adequately acted upon. Many recommendations have not been adequately resourced nor fully implemented.

B. Recommendations

1. Recommendations to Governments

Ensure greater efforts to implement the gender plan of action at the country level, including by strengthening networks and partnerships with national non-governmental organization working on gender and environment and to ensure that gender equality is integrated into legislation in the environmental sector.

Develop differentiated approaches to gender-related environmental issues in developed countries, developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

Integrate a gender prospective into environmental education systems at all levels and encourage the involvement of young environmental leaders in gender equality issues. The United Nations Decade for Education for Sustainable Development recognizes the need for gender integration in the achievement of its objectives, which are to improve the quality of education, reorient education to address local needs, create public awareness on sustainability issues and to build capacity in the area of sustainable development – including tutoring programmes, access to thematic information centres and technical assistance, particularly among young and indigenous women. Provide support to implement mentorship programmes for young women.

Ensure the increased involvement of women in all aspects of sustainable development and environmental decision-making, particularly in the context of water management. Adopt and implement the recommendations of women adopted at the twelfth and thirteenth session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development.

2. Recommendations to UNEP

Mainstream the gender plan of action into UNEP activities, including at the regional and subregional levels. Request donors to commit adequate resources dedicated to the implementation of the gender plan of action, including sufficient funds in a non-discretionary, fixed line of the UNEP budget, so that implementation of the plan of action is not dependent on the existence of extra-budgetary resources. Consideration should be given to the creation of a gender and environment trust fund for civil society to facilitate the mainstreaming of gender and environment in the implementation of environmental programmes.

Involve civil society fully in the implementation of the plan of action, including the Network of Women Ministers of the Environment and civil society organizations working at the nexus of gender equality and the environment and United Nations “sister” entities with expertise on gender equality and human rights and alliances with women’s environmental citizens networks. UNEP should facilitate the establishment of women’s environment networks in regions where they do not yet exist (particularly Africa).

Implement the four main outcomes resulting from the UNEP WAVE conference of 2004, ensuring resources and broad support for regional WAVE conferences to be organized in cooperation with civil society partners.

Ensure that special attention is given to traditional knowledge and the wisdom of women from indigenous peoples and in rural communities on the contribution of such knowledge and wisdom to environmental conservation.

Play a leading role on the issue of protection of women in post-conflict situations in regard to access to land and resources.

Broaden gender perspectives in multilateral environmental agreements.

Analyse the process and outcomes of the twenty-fourth session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum from a gender perspective

III. Water and environment

A. Issues

According to the World Health Organization, more than 1.1 billion people worldwide do not have access to safe drinking water (a number expected to increase to 3 billion by 2025), 2.2 billion people do not have access to basic sanitation, 90 per cent of wastewater discharged to waterways in developing countries goes untreated, and 4 million children die each year from water-related diseases. The situation is especially critical in Africa.

Many regions in the world are either "stressed" or "severely stressed" in terms of water supply. Water scarcity is expected to increase due to increased water demand accompanied by an increase in population in drought-prone areas, possible future decreases in precipitation and unsustainable practices such as irrigation.

Water stress, a direct result of water scarcity, may result in conflict over shared water resources in many regions. There are more than 260 river basins crossing international boundaries, with a third of these involving more than two countries. Many of these countries are heavily reliant upon these rivers for the provision of freshwater. These basins are frequently heavily polluted. There is thus a great potential for conflict between States that are sharing these resources.

As human influence on climate is becoming increasingly apparent, water managers must design adaptation strategies for increased climate variability. This poses a serious threat to agricultural production, fisheries and forestry.

We believe that the achievement of all the Millennium Development Goals hinges on the quality and quantity of available water. Freshwater plays a disproportionately powerful role through its impact on such factors as food production, hygiene, sanitation and health, food security and vulnerability and maintenance of ecosystem services. Water security is an increasingly important issue.

1. Recommendations to Governments

Recognize access to safe water as an essential human right, essential for sustainable development and poverty alleviation. Gender must be considered in all water-related issues, including increased involvement of women in all aspects of water management and decision-making. Furthermore, the rights of indigenous peoples to control and manage water resources within their territories and sites of traditional use should be recognized, valuing their ancestral knowledge in this area.

Recognize that each State should assume its role as the foremost regulating authority, guaranteeing water availability and quality for all users, rather than pursuing further privatization of water services.

Reinforce national commitments under Millennium Development Goal 7, especially in relation to ensuring access to clean water by 2015, and promote action by adopting annual strategic plans and budgets at the community and regional levels to meet the Millennium Development Goal targets of reducing by half by 2015 the proportion of people without access to safe water and sanitation.

Ensure that all national and trans-boundary planning on water resource management is based on the ecosystem approach and facilitate the involvement of stakeholders and the development of comprehensive laws and regulations. Incorporate the best available science and technology in the management of water and river basins and incorporate integrated water resource management approaches, including pro-poor policies which safeguard the environment.

Adopt and periodically revise integrated water resource management plans to achieve efficient use of limited water resources and to reach a balance between demand and supply. Integrated water resource management plans should focus on achieving the maximum efficiency in agricultural use of water. Incorporate the potential effects on the environment, particularly in coastal areas and key biodiversity areas, and other environmental issues in addition to socio-economic aspects in the development of integrated water resource management plans. Link integrated water resource management to integrated coastal zone management.

Create and strengthen river basin councils, including through the involvement of key stakeholders and civil society groups in decision-making and implementation of more effective water management and efficient use policies.

Conduct comprehensive assessments of the vulnerability of water resources to environmental change, particularly climate change, for all river and lake basins; such assessments are urgently needed to manage vulnerability risks through adaptation and mitigation measures and integrated management options.

Support partnerships in the area of water and sanitation, particularly those which support implementation of multilateral environmental agreements. Further, encourage funding for partnerships from new and additional resources from intergovernmental organizations, Governments and other stakeholders.

Promote reuse, recycling and alternative sources of water to reduce demand on available resources. This includes making use of the potential for rainwater harvesting as a supplement or alternative to limited local water resources and integrating this into the mainstream water development agenda and making better use of wastewater, ensuring a reduction in the pollution of waterways and coastal areas.

Develop policies that encourage the production of environmentally appropriate crops in the countries where they are indigenous, including modernization of irrigation methods to reduce waste and avoiding the use of genetically modified seeds and other modern techniques unless proven safe for health and the environment.

Ensure that full participatory environmental impact assessments are undertaken in accordance with the recommendations of the World Commission on Dams and that decisions taken consider the potentially negative impacts on the environment and local development.

2. Recommendations to UNEP

The UNEP leadership in achieving implementation of the Millennium Development Goals can enhance other United Nations water-related efforts. UNEP should assist developing countries to take practical steps to adapt to the impacts of climate change while they gain practical experience in water resources management.

UNEP should investigate with other relevant bodies the application and utility of decentralized environmental wastewater and sanitation systems such as plant-soil wastewater filters and urine diverting sanitation systems.

UNEP should assume a leading role in support of initiatives to assist developing countries to build capacity in education, training, and raising awareness in water governance and watershed management, particularly shared watersheds, including the use of existing measures such as UNEP toolkits.

IV. Chemicals management and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management

A. Issues

The need to ensure environmental sustainability and eco-security is a prerequisite for poverty alleviation. The importance of mainstreaming chemicals management and addressing poverty in all sectoral policies should be a priority.

Chemicals, including pesticides, industrial chemicals and consumer chemicals, have become indispensable in many economic activities and are increasingly used in the industrial, agricultural and consumer sectors of society. Evidence suggests that chemicals can contribute to environment and health problems at various stages during their life cycles from production to disposal. Of the approximately 100,000 chemicals on the global market, less than 10 percent have been tested for health effects. Children and women, including women of childbearing age, are particularly vulnerable to chemical exposure, some of which have no safe exposure limits.

It is now widely recognized that chemicals need to be managed properly in order to achieve a sustainable level of agricultural and industrial development and a high level of environmental and human protection.

The Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) is a plan for ensuring that by 2020 chemicals are used and produced in ways that lead to the minimization of significant adverse effects on human health and the environment.

Civil society organizations welcome and support SAICM and the concept that it will lead to the adoption of a legally binding international instrument.

For the implementation of SAICM in developing countries and economies in transition, the key challenges are lack of capacity, the need for financial support and technical assistance, inadequate legislation, lack of awareness, political barriers, poor compliance and the often low priority given to environmental issues by national Governments.

The gap between developed and developing countries needs to be recognized and reduced in terms of human, financial and technical resources for the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements.

Some regions have a special responsibility as major chemicals producers and consumers to set a leadership example in the area of chemicals management and to avoid outsourcing or exporting harm through global trade.

There is a need to establish an early warning system, including technical know-how and capacity building, to improve international chemicals management.

Some regions have a special responsibility to ensure that the transboundary movement of nuclear and radioactive and other hazardous wastes ceases.

Mercury, lead and cadmium (heavy metals)

The heavy metals mercury, cadmium, lead and others pose special concerns because of their permanence and potential for serious harm to the environment and to future generations.

The risks from these metals need to be addressed further by appropriate actions at the local, national, regional and global levels. We therefore urge the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum and Governments to authorize and initiate work on legally binding global instruments and to explore the value of regulating heavy metals under existing multilateral instruments; to reduce the mercury supply by ceasing primary mining of mercury, restricting mercury exports from developed nations, and managing mercury from the closure of chlor-alkali facilities; to establish a mercury use reduction goal (70 per cent by 2017) and achieve this goal by reducing mercury use in products, chlor-alkali plants and small scale gold mining; to reduce the demand for and supply of lead and cadmium by phasing out lead in transportation fuels and replacing lead and cadmium in products with less hazardous materials; to improve the management and disposal of wastes containing heavy metals; and to require manufacturers to assume responsibility for products that contain hazardous metals throughout their life-cycle by, for example, implementing practices identified and recommended by the Lifecycle Initiative developed by UNEP and the Society for Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry.

B. Recommendations

1. Recommendations to Governments

We urge all Governments to adopt, implement and strengthen SAICM as an essential element of global governance. We also urge Governments to address related issues such as pharmaceuticals, food additives and radioactive chemicals.

Implementation of SAICM must embrace core principles and approaches, including the precautionary principle, best environmental practices, the polluter pays principle, liability and compensation, public participation, comprehensive right-to-know and measures to phase out and acquire safer substitutes and solutions for chemicals causing significant impacts on human health or the environment under current conditions.

The ratification and consolidated implementation by all countries of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants and of other chemical- and waste-related agreements should be promoted. Such agreements include the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain

Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, the 1996 Protocol to the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter, and relevant regional chemical- and waste-related agreements.

Extend producer responsibilities, zero-waste and 3Rs policies, emphasizing source recovery. Community ownership should be adopted wherever possible.

Ensure that the SAICM process addresses the need for gender-differentiated data and gender differentiated implementation measures, including multi-sectoral and multi-stake-holder processes. Institutional arrangements for implementation of SAICM must be dynamic and fully participatory.

Increase public awareness of effective chemicals management through the provision of information, knowledge and education at all levels.

2. Recommendations to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum

Urge the World Health Organization to review its DDT and malaria policy regarding DDT as a central tool for malaria prevention in the light of the Stockholm Convention.

Support the strengthening of chemicals management capacity in developing countries, as recommended in the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building.

Improve country reporting with regard to chemicals management, including the listing of new regulations and management strategies for, among other things, chemical disasters and incidents.

Form an international coordinating mechanism of the three main conventions dealing with chemicals and hazardous wastes.

Mandate UNEP to develop (with appropriate financial support) mechanisms for local authorities and governments adequately to address obsolete stockpiles of persistent organic pollutants.

Initiate a coordination process among all multilateral environmental agreement and United Nations agencies, identifying priority areas for synergies, including the need to address major policy and implementation gaps among multilateral environmental agreements.

Pursue all available funding mechanisms (including the Global Environment Facility, multilateral trust funds, official development assistance, focused partnerships and private financial flows) to support sound chemicals management in developing countries and economies in transition. New and additional funds should be made available for SAICM implementation.

Strengthen the capacity of the Chemicals Unit of the UNEP Division of Technology, Industry and Economics to facilitate the implementation of chemicals-related multilateral agreements and initiatives and to assist Governments and civil society in global action for sound chemicals management.

The Global Steering Committee appreciates the follow-up to the Dubai Declaration, including regional SAICM meetings, the Quick Start Programme and the establishment of SAICM focal points for Governments, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations. These SAICM implementing activities should be fully supported and encouraged with enhanced provision of financial support. Additional efforts should be made to accredit non-governmental organization focal points alongside SAICM national and regional focal points.

V. Conclusions

The Global Steering Committee calls upon the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its twenty-fourth session to consider the above statements as contributions toward the betterment of our environment and achievement of sustainable development goals and urges all Governments and stakeholders to support UNEP in the implementation of the recommendations made herein.

The Global Steering Committee and the Global Civil Society Forum will work to support UNEP in its endeavours to implement these recommendations and to ensure a healthy and sustainable global environment.

Annex II

Programme of work for the Eighth Global Civil Society Forum

Saturday 3 February 2007

07:30 – 08:30	Registration
09:00 - 09:30	<p>Opening session *</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome remarks by the Local Secretariat, host to the 8th GCSF, the African Council for Communication Education (ACCE) • Opening remarks by Pr. M. Koech, Chair of the Global Steering Committee • Opening address by C. Boelcke, Director, Division of Regional Cooperation (DRC)
9:30 - 9:45	Election of meeting officers and adoption of the meeting agenda *
9:45 - 11: 00	<p>Session 1: Review of selected GC/GMEF topics and draft decisions: statements and key messages *</p> <p>The Global Steering Committee will present the Global Civil Society Statement and UNEP will present the draft decisions of the GC/GMEF. Resource persons from UNEP and major groups will elaborate further on the issues at stake during the GC/GMEF and highlight how perspectives from major groups can be brought in, with a view to complement the Global Civil Society Statement and provide input into the discussions on the draft decisions. The session will be instrumental in defining key messages to deliver during the GC/GMEF.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Civil Society Statement, Global Steering Committee • Globalization, ecosystem services and human well-being, K. Ramakrishna, Policy Advisor, Executive Office • UNEP water policy and strategy, T. Kasten, Chief, Natural Resources Branch • Gender and the environment, K. Ramakrishna, Policy Advisor, Executive Office • Chemicals management, M. Gubb, Coordinator, SAICM Secretariat, Chemicals Branch
11:00-12:00	<p>Session 2: Presentation of the work programme of the Global Steering Committee *</p> <p>Members of the Steering Committee will present their work. This presentation will be followed by discussions with the participants on the GCSF cycle for 2007-2008.</p>
12:00-14:30	Lunch
14:30 - 15:30	<p>Session 3: Engaging at the 24th GC/GMEF *</p> <p>The MGSB and the Global Steering Committee will present the structure and patterns of the GC/GMEF and give a few “tips” about opportunities major groups should not miss during the coming week, and how to better use those opportunities. This session will address the following: What is the structure of the CG/GMEF? What are the specific expected outcomes? Why? How? When?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • O. Deleuze, Chief, Major Groups and Stakeholders Branch
15:30 – 16:30	Session 4: Finalizing the messages and the strategy for GC24/GMEF *
16:30 - 17:30	Dialogue with A. Steiner, Executive Director of UNEP *
18:00	Cocktail

Sunday 4 February 2007

- 10:00 - 13:00** **Session 5: Way forward to engage major groups in the work of UNEP ***
 The MGSB will present a background paper featuring new modalities to improve the engagement of major groups in the work of UNEP, in the long term. Items to be discussed include: improved and continuous engagement at governance level, new forms of consultations including issue-based consultations, communication and feedback to the constituencies, linking engagement at governance, programmatic and regional levels, etc. A consultative group of experts from various major groups will be invited to this particular session to support the Global Steering Committee and UNEP in developing new modalities for engaging major groups in the work of UNEP.
- O. Deleuze, Chief, Major Groups and Stakeholders Branch
 - E. Neuhaus, Global Steering Committee
 - T. Hammond, Global Steering Committee
 - K. Otto-Zimmermann, Secretary-General, International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) Local Governments for Sustainability
 - J. Gerber, Chief Operating Officer, World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD)
 - J. Mati, Research Associate, CIVICUS World Alliance For Citizen Participation
 - L. Royer, Occupational Health Safety Environment and Sustainable Development Director, International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)
 - J. Rockström, Executive Director, Stockholm Environment Institute
- 13:00 – 15:00** Lunch
- 15:00 - 17:00** **Session 6: Dialogue session on globalization, ecosystem services and human well-being with business and industry, local authorities, indigenous people and their communities and governments' representatives ***
 This dialogue session will provide a space for presenting views of specific groups and open up a discussion with government representatives, environmental NGOs and other major groups present during the Forum. This session will provide different views on addressing key challenges related to globalization, ecosystem services and human well-being.
- Government of Germany
 - Government of South Africa
 - D. Abdel Motaal, Economic Affairs Officer, World Trade Organisation
 - E. Camac, Director, Asociación Ixacavaa de Desarrollo e Información Indígena
 - K. Otto-Zimmermann, Secretary-General, International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) Local Governments for Sustainability
 - J. Gerber, Chief Operating Officer, World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD)
- 17:00 - 18:00** **Session 7: Meeting with the Bureau of the Governing Council / Global Ministerial Environment Forum ***
 Members from the Bureau, together with the Executive Director of UNEP, are expected to exchange views and answer questions from the participants, related to substantive issues, processes, etc. It also aims at sensitizing the Bureau about major group participation in UNEP Governance.
- 18:00 - 18:30** **Closing session**
- Remarks by O. Deleuze, Chief, Major Groups and Stakeholders Branch (MGSB)
 - Remarks by the Local Secretariat, host to the 8th GCSF, the African Council for Communication Education (ACCE)
 - Closing remarks by Pr. M. Koech, Chair of the Global Steering Committee

Annex III

List of participants

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Annex IV

Statements agreed during the 4th session of the Eighth Global Civil Society Forum

8TH GLOBAL CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM 3-4 FEBRUARY 2007

Key Messages: Chemicals

KEY CHEMICAL ISSUES

The Global Civil Society Forum participants met on February 3rd to define the key messages to the Member States at the Governing Council Meeting (UNEP/GC/24/INF/10)

The key issues which Civil Society wants to draw attention to are the need to strengthen financial support for SAICM, the need for global action on Mercury and other heavy metals, the need for addressing actions by different UN agencies conflicting with global environmental conventions, the need to address electronic waste and used tires, and finally, the need to address asbestos.

MERCURY, CADMIUM AND LEAD

The risks from mercury, lead and cadmium needs to be expediently addressed by appropriate actions at the local, national, regional and global levels.

We therefore urge the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum and Governments to authorize and initiate work on legally binding global instruments³ to reduce mercury emissions and the mercury supply by ceasing primary mining of mercury, restricting mercury exports from developed nations, and managing mercury from the closure of chlor-alkali facilities;

Explore the value of regulating heavy metals under existing or new multilateral instruments;

- to establish a mercury use reduction goal (70 per cent by 2017) and achieve this goal by reducing mercury use in products, chlor-alkali plants and small scale gold mining;
- to reduce the demand for and supply of lead and cadmium,
- to improve the management and disposal of wastes containing heavy metals;
- to require manufacturers to assume responsibility for products that contain hazardous metals throughout their life-cycle
- by phasing out lead in transportation fuels and replacing lead and cadmium in products with less hazardous materials;
- by implementing practices identified and recommended by the Lifecycle Initiative developed by UNEP and the Society for Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry.

3 On this point the business and industry major group has a different opinion

Because actions to reduce mercury supply, demand and emissions are urgent, partnerships and other voluntary actions should be reinforced, reflecting on regional priorities, while work on legally binding global instruments is initiated (for example, urgent provision of information to vulnerable groups on main pathways of mercury intake or addressing that deforestation can liberate existing mercury in the environment).

Additional research is needed to highlight the relationship between health effects and mercury.

SAICM, Funding, CAPACITY BUILDING AND MAINSTREAMING

Pursue all available funding mechanisms (GEF, multilateral trust funds, official development assistance, focused partnerships, private financial flows) to support sound chemical management in developing countries & economies in transition. New and additional funds should be made available for SAICM implementation.

SAICM to give sufficient capacity-building at all levels, including institutional framework, i.e. legal framework, infrastructure, physical and non-physical requirements and needs.

Mainstreaming SAICM into national development plans.

UN Reform, UNEP, SYSTEM WIDE COHERENCE AND THE EXAMPLES OF THE STOCKHOLM, ROTTERDAM AND BASEL-CONVENTION

We call on UNEP to take a leading role in assuring system wide coherence with regards to global environmental conventions, in particular.

Mandate UNEP to work with WHO to review from its DDT and Malaria policy regarding DDT as a central tool for Malaria in light of the phase-out agreement contained in Stockholm Convention on persistent organic pollutants.

Mandate UNEP to form an international coordinating mechanism of the three main conventions dealing with chemicals & hazardous wastes, in particular the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm convention, so as to help preventing future criminal activities as happened with the toxic waste dumping in Ivory Coast.

Mandate UNEP to promote measures to address breach of procedure of international environmental conventions by member states such as the case of Annex III (crysotile asbestos) of the Rotterdam Convention.

HAZARDOUS WASTE

Mandate UNEP to work with the Basel Convention and national governments to develop urgent measures where the international waste trade and hazardous waste conventions are not yet effectively implemented, to halt the export of used tyres, electric and electronic waste⁴.

⁴ Business is of other opinion, and would add "if appropriate and safe recycling is not assured", e.g. by pre-paid recycling fees

Request the Stockholm secretariat (UNEP), as part of its capacity building activities, to provide regulatory and technical guidelines, on halting incineration and co-incineration of hazardous waste.

ASBESTOS

UNEP should promote better understanding of global and regional impact of all forms of asbestos, on the environment and public health and provide guidelines for a programme towards the global elimination of asbestos use.

We call on those countries, which have already banned use and production of asbestos in their own countries to stop trade in asbestos and set up policies for safe clean up and disposal of asbestos waste.

MILITARY ACTIVITIES AND CHEMICALS

Chemicals, including pesticides, industrial chemicals and consumer chemicals, have become indispensable in many economic activities and are increasingly used in the industrial, agricultural and consumer sectors of society, and by the military.

Prepared by the Chemicals Working Group during the Global Civil Society Forum from 3-4 February 2007. This document attempts to represent the outcomes of discussions among the major groups present and was explicitly endorsed by the following: science and research; trade unions; business; women; indigenous peoples; children and youth; and environmental NGOs.

8TH GLOBAL CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM 3-4 FEBRUARY 2007

Key Messages: Gender

Global Civil Society participants met on February 3-4, 2007 to define the key messages we wish to convey on the issue of gender equality and the environment. We support the Gender Recommendations contained within the Global Civil Society Statement of the 24th Session of the GC/GMEF. We also note with appreciation UNEP's efforts to implement Governing Council Decision 23/11 on gender and the environment. To further implement this decision, we recommend the following:

To Governments:

- 1) Commit adequate resources and support to enable UNEP to fully implement the UNEP Gender Plan of Action at the global, regional, and divisional levels;
- 2) Dedicate specific, adequate resources to implement the outcomes of the 2004 UNEP WAVE conference, including the four project proposals on i) knowledge generation for improved policy-making: best practices for ensuring women's equal access to, management of, and decision-making over natural resources (e.g. water) in order to develop model policies and programs; ii) work at the gender/conflict/environment nexus; iii) capacity-building: a mentorship program for young women as environmental activists; and iv) work at the nexus of environment and human rights: using CEDAW (the women's rights Convention) and other human rights instruments to ensure women's equal participation with men in environmental protection.

To UNEP:

- 1) Fully implement the four project proposals emerging from the 2004 UNEP WAVE conference (see #2 above) and ensure both support and adequate resources for regular WAVE conferences, both regionally and globally, to be organized in cooperation with civil society partners;
- 2) Develop, or support the development (in partnership with civil society partners), of programs, policies and practices to ensure women's equal access with men to
 - management of environmental resources,
 - environmental policy making,
 - environmental justice
 - environmental information,
 as they relate, in particular, to land rights, water and other natural resources, through education, legal advocacy, legislative reform, or other means;
- 3) Incorporate a gender equality and women's human rights approach into every aspect of the SAICM strategy;
- 4) Recognize, in UNEP's policies, practices, and programs, that the traditional knowledge and the role of women from indigenous, local and rural communities is critical to environmental stewardship and conservation;
- 5) Include women as well as men in every phase of environmental management in the context of conflict—from prevention to post-conflict reconstruction—recognizing that women's access to land and resources in this context requires special attention, and that women as well as men have a critical role to play in

conflict transformation (prevention, management and resolution) as well as environmental conservation.

Prepared by the Gender Working Group during the Global Civil Society Forum from 3-4 February 2007. The following attempts to represent the outcomes of discussions among the major groups present although this is may not be considered explicitly endorsed by all attendees.

8TH GLOBAL CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM 3-4 FEBRUARY 2007

Key Messages: Globalization⁵

Theoretically, globalization is a neutral process that can have positive or positive outcomes for sustainable development. In reality, on this planet that is marked by a tremendous gap between a small, rich, powerful elite and a large, disempowered, poor majority, globalization has widened this gap. It has led to a concentration of wealth, power, natural resources, environmental space, information and intellectual property in the hands of a few. This concentration has taken place to the detriment of the majority of the world's population whose ecosystems, water resources and traditional knowledge and other commons have been exploited, polluted, privatized and sold for the benefit of a small, wealthy minority. The economic pillar of sustainable development has undermined the social and environmental pillars of sustainable development in many cases. Women are the majority of the world's poor and are disproportionately affected by these social impacts. The unsustainable consumption patterns by the rich elite mean they occupy a disproportional amount of the earth's environmental space, and bear the main responsibility for the pollution and destruction of the earth's ecosystems.

The Executive Director's discussion paper seems to ignore these equity dimensions of globalization and the social impacts of globalization. Instead, it favors market-based approaches to environmental challenges. Regardless whether these approaches are effective from an environmental perspective, they can have very serious negative impacts on social groups that are economically marginalized and do not have the resources to pay for so-called environmental services. Groups like women, Indigenous Peoples and landless farmers also lack the formal land rights and marketing skills needed to compete in these markets.

We urge the Governing Council to strengthen UNEP's work in the following areas:

- Put equity, fairness, human wellbeing and ecosystems at the heart of UNEP's programs and policies
- Dramatically strengthen its work on changing unsustainable consumption, production and distribution patterns, which form the main driver behind ecosystem destruction in a globalized world
- Halt the privatization and commodification of water resources and ecosystems through so-called markets in ecosystem services, in the light of the negative social impacts of these markets upon women, Indigenous Peoples and the monetary poor in general
- - Ensure respect for basic human and labour rights and introduce policies for just employment transition as a central feature of environmental protection and to ensure that workers negatively affected by changes are provided with safe and decent employment alternatives,⁶ for example, the creation of green jobs.

⁵ This report attempts to represent the outcomes of discussions among the major groups present although this may not be considered explicitly endorsed by all attendees

⁶ See also the Final resolution of the Trade Union Assembly on Labour and the Environment, 15 - 17 January 2006, UNEP/DPDL/TUALE/2

- Protect traditional knowledge, including through ensuring coherence between environmental agreements dealing with genetic resources and traditional knowledge, and international instruments on the rights of Indigenous peoples, especially ILO Convention 169.
- Safeguard the State's regulatory authority over the public commons, including in particular water and biodiversity, taking into account the human right to water and the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities regarding their lands, seeds and forests;
- Strengthen its work on developing international legally binding instruments that set social and environmental minimum standards for corporate behavior
- Promote effective participation of environmental Ministers in trade negotiations and urge countries not to ratify trade agreements that might undermine their environmental policies.

As Indigenous Peoples are one of the groups that is most profoundly affected by globalization, we also draw your attention to the annexed position paper by the Indigenous Peoples' Organizations present at this meeting.

ANNEX

Declaration of Indigenous Peoples to the 24th session of the Global Ministerial Environment Forum

In the different national, regional and international events, Indigenous Peoples have manifested repeatedly that the way in which globalization is happening forms a threat to the existence of Indigenous Peoples, due to the fact that globalization constitutes a principal obstacle to the recognition of the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The global situation has deteriorated the self-sufficient economies of Indigenous Peoples, causing food insecurity, deepening poverty and the loss of their lands, territories, culture, language and identity.

Globalization is producing actions that prejudice and form obstacles to the very sustainable development and livelihoods of peoples.

The predominance of international free trade agreements over national sovereignty undermines political constituencies, laws and national norms that protect our rights. International corporations and industrialized countries impose their global agenda upon negotiations, affecting on this way the situation of our peoples.

In the process of globalization, the framework of human rights and the rights of Indigenous Peoples should be the basis for trade, investment, development and poverty alleviation policies and programs. The norms of liberalization and the impositions of the World Bank, the IMF and other International Financial Institutions should be changed, which demand from countries that they liberalize their laws, giving better protection to Northern industries than to their peoples.

We reaffirm our commitment with Mother Earth and our responsibility towards future generations, to maintain peace, equity and justice. We continue to insist in the compliance with the commitments that were made at the Earth Summit. The commitments that Indigenous Peoples acquired in Agenda 21, which include the right to full and effective participation in the different decision-making processes regarding environmental themes, which in the majority of cases have not been translated into reality due to a lack of political will.

As Peoples, we reaffirm our right to self-determination and to possess, control and manage our lands and ancestral territories, waters and other resources. Our lands and territories are the basis of our existence. We are earth and the earth is who we are. We have a special relationship, spiritually as well as materially, with our lands and territories, which are eternally united to our survival and the preservation and better development of our systems of knowledge and our cultures, to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in the management of ecosystems. We encourage the growing acknowledgement of Indigenous Peoples in the United Nations.

And you should not forget that almost everything that has been conserved until now on this planet is thanks to us, thanks to our way of living in balance with nature, as part of her. We reaffirm our message to the World Summit on Sustainable Development that Indigenous Peoples play a vital role in sustainable development.

8TH GLOBAL CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM 3-4 FEBRUARY 2007

Key Messages: War, Militarism, and Environment

Civil society points out the breach of human and ecosystem security due to negative impacts of war, armed conflict and military activities on the environment.

War, armed conflict and militarism run counter to the principles of the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21 and to the principles found in the civil society Alternative Treaty 45 on Militarism, the Environment and Development, adopted at the NGO Global Forum 1-15, June 1992 at the Rio Earth Summit.

In light of large expenditures of military budgets, the three pillars of sustainable development - environmental, social, and economic - either are destroyed or suffer harm due to military impact on the environment. Wars and forced occupation are imposed on some areas of the world to compete on and possess natural resources, mainly water, land and energy sources. West Asia region has, and continues to be, heavily affected by wars and conflicts. Most Palestinians are denied their historical and ancestral right to safe potable water; their available drinking water is below WHO criteria. Studies by UN and other research centers have shown very high cancer rate and birth defects among children and newborns in Iraq.

Forced migration of environmental refugees, human and/or other species, is created due to war.

Stress is placed on human and ecosystem health due to militarism, unforeseen consequences of militarism, such as killing and permanently disabling living human and other species, the accidental shifting of land mines and other unexploded ordnance by the East Asian tsunami, where populations are already marginalized and vulnerable. Due to landmines, cluster bombs, and unexploded ordnances, agricultural lands are deserted and socioeconomic livelihoods are lost.

"Peacetime" also presents serious issues, including public exposure to hazardous wastes left by military activities and ongoing public exposure to air, water, soil, and noise pollution. Whether the actors are native or foreign forces, or contracted, there appears to be room for critical improvements in the way these actors share risk information with the public and prevent community impacts.

Military activities are exempted from compliance to environmental laws, even in powerful industrialized countries.

We urge the ED of UNEP to:

- To be cognizant of the issues of pro- poor governance of local resources, in light of the agreement his predecessor signed with UNESCO, to mainstream such issues into the formal and informal education aspects of the UN Decade for Sustainable Development Education.
- Examine the links between the trans-boundary transportation of pollution due to military production and the UNEP Regional Seas Programme.

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- Survey globally the state of the environmental consequence from military activities during times of armed conflicts and "peacetime" with its member States, Civil Society Organizations and other relevant entities and individuals.
 - Fully Implements the program on "Military activities and the environment" which is Section 20 of the Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law for the First Decade of the Twenty-First Century (Montevideo Programme III).

We urge governments to impede any use for "massive" destruction weapons during wars, ban the use of depleted uranium (DU), and to redirect investments allocated to weapon production, sale, or purchase, towards other areas such as sustainable development initiatives and programs.

Finally, sustainable industries can be created and supported from fractions of the financial resources that would be reallocated from present military budgets.

8TH GLOBAL CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM 3-4 FEBRUARY 2007

Key Messages: Water Policy and Strategy

Civil society hopes Governments recognize the critical importance of the “UNEP water policy and strategy” and adopts this document as UNEP’s first step in taking action to address poorly managed freshwater resources that cross or mark international boundaries, access to water resources for agriculture and industry, and a growing public health crises due to lack of access to safe drinking water and sustainable sanitation. Civil society highlights two key messages for UNEP and Governments to bring into their decisions as they move forward addressing:

1. Access to and Benefit Sharing of Water Resources for Vulnerable Communities

- Recognizing indigenous, rural, and locals peoples’ safe and affordable access to water and sustainable sanitation.
- Addressing climate change’s impacts on the poor and rural communities by proposing guidelines and funding for methods measures of adaptation and mitigation;
- Elevating the important role of forest protection in ensuring urban and rural access to water supply and providing guidelines and funding for development of legal instruments;
- Promoting and providing guidelines for funding mechanisms to assure equitable sharing of benefits between upstream and downstream groups and access and participation in decision making for all affected sectors and communities (e.g. water basin agencies);
- Recognize access to safe water as a fundamental human right, essential for sustainable development and poverty alleviation, which means that each state should assume its role to guarantee water availability and quality for all users, rather than pursuing further privatization.
- Calling on UNEP and Governments to increase existing and future financial support through innovative mechanisms, e.g., the GEF and a “global sanitation bond” (under development, similar to GAVI Bond); and
- Highlighting UNEP’s role to build capacity on community education concerning root causes of water pollution and the linkages between public health, sustainable water management, beneficial impacts of safe water and sanitation on HIV/AIDS affected communities; and the preventative impacts of sustainable sanitation.

2. Trans-boundary River Basins, Lakes, Aquifers and Aquifer Systems

- Calling for a review of existing treaties that restrict basin state’s equitable rights of access to trans-boundary freshwater resources and for the adoption of agreements that promote interstate cooperation on the integrated management of these resources.
- Calling on the world’s governments to ratify and implement the UN Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses.

- Urging all member states of the Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) to accede to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Trans-boundary Watercourses and International Lakes, ratify its Protocols on Water and Health and Civil Liability, and accept its 2003 amendment that expands the convention's geographic scope beyond the UNECE region.
 - Calling on states to submit comments by December 2007 and engage in the drafting process of the UN International Law Commission's Draft Articles on the Law of Aquifers and Aquifer Systems, for the adoption of a future aquifer agreement at the global level.
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