

CIVIL SOCIETY CONSULTATIONS ON INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE

Nairobi, 22 and 23 May 2001

REPORT

I. INTRODUCTION

1. At the twenty-first session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, held in Nairobi from 5 to 9 February 2001, the Council adopted decision 21/21 entitled "International environmental governance", in which it outlined a process for the review of the current state of international environmental governance and the submission of the results of the review to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, to be held in Johannesburg in 2002. The Council stipulated that the review process should benefit from, among other inputs, the views of major groups and individuals from outside the United Nations system.

2. The Civil Society Consultations on International Environmental Governance were held on 22 and 23 May 2001 at UNEP headquarters in Nairobi in order to enable representatives of civil society organizations to give their views on international environmental governance in general, and specifically on a report on the subject prepared by the Executive Director of UNEP (UNEP/IGM/1/2). The views expressed by the representatives of civil society would be taken into account by the Executive Director in the subsequent stages of the review process.

3. The consultations featured presentations by UNEP staff, selected government representatives and representatives of civil society organizations, followed by plenary sessions, breaking up into groups to discuss key issues and reporting back to the plenary.

II. OPENING OF THE MEETING

4. Participants were welcomed to the consultations by the Chair, Mr Bakary Kante, the Director of the Division of Policy Development and Law, who expressed his satisfaction at the large number of civil society and government representatives present at the meeting. Saying he was sure that their contributions would serve to influence UNEP's future direction, he invited the Deputy Executive Director of UNEP, Mr Shafqat Kakakhel, to address the meeting.

5. Mr Kakakhel thanked the representatives of the civil society organizations and Governments who had responded positively to UNEP's invitation. He extended a particular welcome to the representative of the Government of Norway, which had provided UNEP with support for the meeting. Protecting the global environment and achieving sustainable development was the responsibility of all, he said. The Malmö Ministerial Declaration attached importance to the role of civil society and the business sector in shaping the agenda of sustainable development. Civil society was instrumental in promoting innovative ideas, bringing emerging environmental issues to the attention of policy makers, raising public awareness and promoting transparency.

6. According to the Malmö Declaration, the World Summit in 2002 should work towards "an institutional architecture that has the capacity to effectively address wide-ranging environmental threats in a globalizing world. UNEP's role in this regard should be strengthened and its financial base broadened and made more predictable". A future strengthened and streamlined international environmental governance system should be credible to both Governments and other stakeholders, command authority arising from an appropriate institutional mandate, be backed by adequate and stable financial resources and be open to participation by all actors. He invited the participants to express their views on those and other issues. He believed that it was only when institutional change was backed by popular and political will that tangible results could be achieved. Civil society had an essential role to play in bringing about those changes.

III. ATTENDANCE

7. The consultations were attended by representatives from 56 civil society organizations from all regions around the world while the representatives of 5 Permanent Missions to UNEP attended as observers. Also present were representatives of the business community, faith-based organizations, research institutes and several other sectors. A full list of the participants is to be found in the annex.

IV. AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

8. The following agenda was adopted for the meeting:

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Opening speech by the Deputy Executive Director of UNEP.
3. Special message from the Political Adviser to the Minister of the Environment of Norway.

4. Address by the Permanent Representative of India to UNEP and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.
5. Presentation by the Permanent Representative of Sweden to UNEP and UNCHS.
6. Introductory remarks by representatives of non-governmental organizations and civil society.
7. Organization of work.
8. Adoption of the agenda.
9. Organization of work of the consultations.
10. Consideration of the note by the secretariat on international environmental governance.
11. Statements by representatives of non-governmental organizations, civil society and the private sector.
12. Debate and exchange of views.
13. Other matters.
14. Closure of the meeting.

9. It was agreed that the plenary would be facilitated by co-facilitators representing the participants and the secretariat. It was also agreed that following the plenary, the participants would break into four groups to discuss the following issues:

Multilateral environmental agreements

Chair – Ms. Ijhana Christian, Caribbean Conservation Association

Rapporteur – Mr. Jan-Gustav Standenaes, Global Facility Network

Financing

Chair – Ms. Barbara Gemmill, Environment Liaison Centre International Rapporteur – Mr. Lucas Delfino, Fundacion Ecologica Universal, Argentina

Compliance

Chair – Ms. Simone Lovera, Friends of the Earth, Paraguay

Rapporteur – Ms. Maria Ivanova, Yale Center for Environmental Law and Policy

Visions for UNEP and its mandate

Chair – Mr. Youba Sokona, Environment Development Action in the Third World (ENDA), Senegal

Rapporteur – Mr. Moses Isooba, Uganda Wildlife Society.

V. PRESENTATIONS

10. Mr Jo Stein Moen, Political Adviser to the Minister of the Environment of Norway, explained that the root causes of environmental degradation were embedded in social and economic problems. Those problems included pervasive poverty, unsustainable production and consumption patterns, inequity in distribution of wealth and resources and the debt burden weighing on many developing countries. To improve the present structure of international environmental governance, the world needed a single global environmental authority, which should be a new, stronger UNEP. The future shape of international environmental governance must incorporate civil society, following possibly the model evolved by the Commission on Sustainable Development. The various multilateral conventions should be better coordinated, and the current shortcomings in compliance with international commitments must be addressed. Norway had long been an advocate of participation by environmental non-governmental organizations in the global arena. As evidence of its support for the environment, Norway was also prepared to discuss a financial model for a new and strengthened UNEP based on burden-sharing and multi-annual commitments.

11. Mr Rajiv Bhatia, Permanent Representative of India to UNEP and UNCHS, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, acknowledged the need for a review of environmental governance. At the same time, he said those countries, in which sustained economic development and poverty eradication were the main priorities, felt that the review process should be carried out in line with the concept of sustainable development. Currently, it was very difficult for developing countries to implement and comply with the more than 500 treaties and other related agreements which already existed. There was therefore a need to streamline the current institutional system, and that could best be achieved by strengthening the role of UNEP. To this end, political will was necessary and sacrifices would have to be made. Finally, the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities should be strictly applied.

12. Mr Johan Frisell, Permanent Representative of Sweden to UNEP and UNCHS, speaking on behalf of the European Union, assured the participants that the European Union welcomed UNEP's efforts to enhance cooperation with non-governmental organizations and other major groups. It was because of the great importance that the European Union attached to the relationship between UNEP and civil society that it had initiated the discussion that had led to the adoption of Governing Council decision 21/19 on "The role of civil society". He expressed a wish to see civil society play a critical role in independently reviewing the successes and shortfalls in the implementation of Agenda 21 and other outcomes of the Rio Summit, and promised that the European Union would give careful consideration to the findings of the consultations.

13. Expressing the hope that the Johannesburg summit would take tangible steps towards putting in place a more coherent and integrated framework where all countries participated equally, establishing reform measures which would be felt and implemented on the ground, and laying down a strengthened financial foundation for the international environmental architecture (for example, for institutions such as UNEP and the Global Environment Facility), he said that the European Union would look into the possibility of increasing its contribution to UNEP provided that other contributors also committed themselves to the same.

14. There were three main reasons why the European Union believed that participation by civil society in environmental governance was important. First, sustainable development was intimately linked to democracy, and to the rights of stakeholders. For that reason, during the recent ninth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, the European Union had underlined the value of principle 10 of the Rio Declaration, in which Governments had committed themselves to promoting access to environmental information, public participation in decision-making and access to judicial and administrative proceedings in environmental matters. Secondly, multilateral negotiations could benefit from the experience of major civil society groups. He cited the example of the negotiations on the United Nations Desertification Convention, where African and other non-governmental groups had been instrumental in leading the discussion aimed at combating land degradation. Thirdly, there was a need for partnerships to continue to evolve - as in the collaboration between civil society, the private sector and Governments.

15. The European Union commended UNEP for the efforts it had already made in increasing its exchanges with non-governmental organizations, and wished to see the secretariat go further in that direction. UNEP's relationship with civil society needed to be regularized and formalized. Despite the progress being made by the UNEP secretariat, the Governing Council was still isolated from civil society. To enable civil society to meaningfully influence the work of the Governing Council, the Council's rules of procedure needed to be reviewed, and in particular, Rule 69..

16. Mr Leandro Arellano, Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UNEP, pointed out that poverty and major industries were the two main generators of pollution. Measures had been taken to address them, but how much real progress had been made? The two main issues facing the participants in the meeting were: what were the current weaknesses in international environmental governance, and what were the options for the future? Governments were doing their best to address the problems, and had expressed their own views separately on the Executive Director's report, but they badly needed the advice, support and action of civil society in their efforts.

17. Ms Simone Lovera, of Friends of the Earth, noting the many legally binding agreements which had been produced since 1990, said that the time had come to give priority to their implementation through mechanisms to promote compliance which would include a dispute settlement component. Financial, technical and political support for implementing the existing agreements should be generated. In addition, further policy development was required in two areas: the establishment of legally binding rules to regulate the conduct of transnational corporations, and the establishment of legally binding agreements on agriculture, which would aim at banning

dumping and export subsidies, preventing biopiracy and further strengthening the current regimes on pesticides and genetically modified organisms. She noted that the unsustainable type of agriculture being promoted in the North was leading to the destruction of agricultural economies in developing countries. It was of specific concern to Friends of the Earth that the rulings of the World Trade Organization (WTO) were undermining the implementation of sustainable development agreements. WTO had a Committee on Trade and Environment, but it had been inclined to look at the negative impacts of sustainable development on trade rather than the negative impacts of trade on sustainable development.

18. Ms Maria Ivanova, of the Yale University Center for Environmental Law and Policy, defined global governance as "the framework of social and economic systems and legal and political structures through which humanity manages itself". She explained that the nature of environmental problems at the global level and the inability of the existing regime to cope with the challenges demanded rethinking and reconfiguration of the international institutional architecture.

19. Currently, there were four major problems in the international environmental governance system: failed collective action, fragmentation, deficient authority and insufficient legitimacy. Refinement of the institutional status quo would not adequately address those structural problems, and alternative governance architecture was necessary. Several key principles should form the foundation of institutional reform - subsidiarity, policy integration, broad-based participation, transparency and accountability. Instead of devising new institutional units nested within the current structures and multiplying the environmental bodies already existing, the present international environmental governance system should be radically reconfigured to correspond to the multiple levels of governance. What was needed was the consolidation of some institutions, the coordination of the functions and activities of others, and the establishment of permanent consultative relationships with the rest, the core of that new institutional mechanism being a "global public policy network" that would ensure broad representation, meaningful participation, transparency and accountability.

20. Ultimately, the strengthening and revitalization of international environmental governance required a stronger political will, and political will was only generated when enough people dared to dictate to political elites. The future of international environmental governance and the sustainability of life on the planet thus hinged on the ability of civil society groups to galvanize and channel the power of the people they represent.

21. Mr Tariq Banuri of the Stockholm Environment Institute -Boston Center explained that the process of globalization had significantly weakened the ability of countries to protect themselves against exogenous shocks. The increasing number of problems which defied geographic boundaries and required a coordinated international response found many Governments ill-equipped to deal with them and global institutions unable to guide the processes of negotiation, dispute resolution and standardization. That situation translated into what was often referred to as a crisis of global governance.

22. What then was global governance and how could it be improved? One school of thought, represented by World Bank thinking, focused on form, holding that global governance was mainly a matter of assigning and developing appropriate intergovernmental roles and capabilities. Another perspective, which was of increasing interest to bodies such as UNDP, framed global governance in terms of the relationship between the State and civil society, while a third saw it as the management of governance regimes in such a way that legitimacy and effectiveness were increased. Despite their distinctions, those three viewpoints concurred that global governance existed at the interface between the top-down and bottom-up processes. By contrast, most of the literature devoted to global environmental governance focused on the top-down approach, according to which an improvement in governance was to be sought by reforming government and government-related institutions. Modest but growing bodies of literature were, however, devoted to trying to formalize the role of civil society in the governance process.

23. While all the schools of thought agreed that there was a crisis of global environmental governance, they differed as to the causes of the problem. The dominant perspective saw the crisis as emerging from institutional weaknesses and therefore advocated the restructuring of institutions as the solution. Such restructuring could take one of three forms: a world environmental organization, a revamped UNEP or a reorganization of intergovernmental organizations active in the environment with UNEP at the centre. The school of thought which viewed global governance in terms of the relationship between the State and civil society saw the problem as caused by a lack of popular or political support for global environmental governance. Here the solution proposed lay in building a social basis for environmental action. Three ways had been suggested to achieve this end: global issue networks, global public policy networks or regime management. Those network-oriented approaches concentrated on maximizing the impact of the already existing political will and public support. That system would focus on an incremental agenda for change, namely one that built on the existing political will and integrated the environmental agenda into broader social and economic goals.

24. Ms Laurraine Lotter of the Chemical and Allied Industries Association of South Africa spoke on behalf of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), which had formed an alliance with several forward-looking civil society networks to look into the issue of better global environmental governance. She expressed the hope that the Secretary-General's Global Compact would be a platform by means of which UNEP could be linked with business and civil society.

25. The current challenges included the need for emphasis on sustainable development, including eradication of poverty and extension of basic services to all; meaningful participation by civil society - and in that regard, the role of business as part of civil society should be fully accepted; more equitable involvement of developing regions of the world; and greater transparency in international governance. One major weakness in the area of international environmental governance was poor coordination between the various international bodies charged with sustainable development. Another was UNEP's meagre resource base, which clearly hindered its ability to undertake and manage the large-scale programmes that were needed to involve all sectors of business worldwide. WBCSD supported the idea of strengthening UNEP's resource base,

enlarging its scope and responsibilities and integrating the secretariats of the various conventions.

26. Environmental governance should be improved by reflecting on key objectives, responsibilities and principles of shared action. A special WBCSD "Rio+10 task force" had already embarked on that process, and, in collaboration with the International Chamber of Commerce, had initiated Business Action for Sustainable Development, a campaign aimed at mobilizing the business community at large to contribute to the preparations for the World Summit.

27. African civil society should seize the opportunity presented by the hosting of the World Summit in Africa to ensure that its participation in international environmental governance was enhanced. Africa should set an example to the world regarding the importance of sustainable development, both in preparation for the Summit and beyond.

28. Mr Halifa Drammeh, Deputy Director of the UNEP Division of Policy Development and Law, introduced a note prepared by the secretariat entitled "Civil society consultations on international environmental governance". Noting the importance attributed by the Governing Council in the Malmö Ministerial Declaration to the role of civil society in addressing environmental issues, he said that civil society brought emerging environmental issues to the attention of policy makers, raised public awareness, promoted innovative ideas and promoted transparency. Cognizant of that critical role of civil society, the Council had resolved, in decision 21/21, that an open-ended intergovernmental group of ministers or their representatives should undertake a comprehensive policy-oriented assessment of existing institutional weaknesses as well as future needs and options for strengthened international environmental governance. The process should benefit from, among other inputs, the views of major groups and individuals outside the United Nations system. He invited the participants to express their ideas on the following issues: a review of the current status of international environmental governance, in particular its strengths and weaknesses, needs and options, financial implications and proposals.

29. The outcome of the meeting on the civil society input would be transmitted to the Open-ended Intergovernmental Group of Ministers or their Representatives established pursuant to Governing Council decision 21/21 which will submit its report to the Governing Council in February 2002 for discussion. The civil society input would form part of the views presented to the tenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development acting as the preparatory body for the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

30. Mr Drammeh then introduced the Executive Director's report on international environmental governance (UNEP/IGM/1/2). He also outlined the consultation process by means of which the report was to be refined for eventual presentation to the Commission on Sustainable Development acting as the preparatory committee for the World Summit on Sustainable Development. In accordance with Governing Council decision 21/21, the process led by the Open-Ended Group of Ministers would benefit by inputs from multilateral environmental agreements, the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UNEP, a group of experts, civil society, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and other stakeholders, the results of which would be submitted to the Governing Council at its seventh special session in February 2002.

VI. GENERAL DISCUSSION

31. The plenary session in the afternoon of 22 May was chaired by Mr Tariq Banuri. It was noted that, although "civil society" had often been taken to mean non-governmental organizations alone, actors from sectors such as the business community, trade unions and faith communities also formed part of civil society. Concern was expressed at the disparity in the treatment of civil society by various United Nations bodies and conferences. At the recent conference on least developed countries, non-governmental organizations had been excluded from contact with government delegations, in contrast to other forums where free interaction had been possible. It was pointed out that political will was not the sole preserve of government, but existed in many sectors. Industry and civil society groups could display a high degree of political will, and it should be exploited where it already existed.

32. Attention was drawn to cases of duplication in reporting procedures. An example was given of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, under which a subsidiary body was to be set up to evaluate chemicals, whereas the Rotterdam Convention on prior informed consent already had an interim subsidiary body which might be considered to be performing the same functions. At the same time, the phenomenon of compartmentalization had resulted in the establishment of government departments to deal with ozone, biodiversity, climate change, etc. both in the North and in the South, and the proliferation of these departments meant that many of them were ineffective.

33. Participants from developing countries complained that, despite the fact that they were unable to secure funds to carry out programmes to protect the environment, there always appeared to be plenty of money available for meetings. Duplication in the work of UNEP and the Commission on Sustainable Development was also mentioned. Many participants suggested that the Commission's work could be taken over by UNEP. Those who opposed the suggestion felt that environment and development should not be separated.

34. Participants felt that UNEP had a greater capacity than a number of other institutions which were mandated to carry out work in the field of the environment, but that UNEP kept too low a profile and should be more aggressive, following the example of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Others considered that more of UNEP's work could be carried out through non-governmental organizations, citing the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), which had drawn on their capabilities very successfully. It was also noted that faith-based communities played a very important role in many societies, and that more effort should be made to involve them in protecting the environment.

35. Following the discussion during the plenary session, Mr Drammeh supplied more information about the background to the consultations. In February 2001, the Governing Council had taken three decisions which would have a direct impact on UNEP's future relations with civil society. The first - 21/19 - concerned the role of civil society and requested the Executive Director to further the consultative process with

civil society, the private sector and other major groups. The second - 21/20 - concerned the governance of UNEP and the third - 21/21 - international environmental governance.

36. While participants had raised a number of problems and mentioned areas needing improvement, Mr Drammeh felt that the positive steps taken in the past three decades should not be overlooked. In 1972, when UNEP had been created, no organization was responsible for the environment. Today, every country had a ministry or a commission with that mandate. Since 1972, progress had been made in four main areas: institutional arrangements, legislative frameworks, assessment, information and monitoring, and multilateral agreements. In response to calls from participants for financial transparency on the part of UNEP, he specified that UNEP had a target budget of US\$ 120 million per biennium, out of which it normally obtained between \$80 and \$90 million. In addition, about 80 trust funds used funds for specific purposes and had a combined budget of about \$500 million.

37. In conclusion, Mr Kante assured the participants that there were no limits to the issues they could discuss in their breakout groups. Participants should feel free to make any recommendations they wished to UNEP.

VII. WORK OF THE BREAKOUT GROUPS

38. The four breakout groups met during the morning of 23 May. In the afternoon a plenary session was held under the chairmanship of Mr Kante during which the groups presented a summary of the results of their deliberations.

Multilateral environmental agreements

39. Since 1992, there had been a fragmentation of environmental governance and issues, and that had led to the gradual erosion of UNEP's environmental authority. The undermining of UNEP's authority had been further exacerbated by the fact that multilateral environmental agreements were headquartered in different places in the world.

40. Most such agreements did not have compliance mechanisms. In order to remedy those and other weaknesses in the area of the environmental governance, the following recommendations were made by the group:

- (a) UNEP should be strengthened. It is not necessary to create a new environmental body. Rather, UNEP should be the coordinating unit for the environment;
- (b) To that end, UNEP's mandate, which dates from 1972, should be revised and modernized, as should its rules of procedure;

- (c) All multilateral environmental agreements, as well as the new secretariat dealing with persistent organic pollutants, should be located at UNEP;
- (d) All multilateral environmental agreements should have sound compliance mechanisms put in place immediately after adoption. These mechanisms should be streamlined and centralized, and they should involve civil society actors;
- (e) Information on multilateral environmental agreements and their relation to UNEP should be prepared in user-friendly language for distribution to the World Summit on Sustainable Development;
- (f) The environmental functions of the Commission on Sustainable Development should be transferred to UNEP;
- (g) Meaningful participation by civil society in international environmental governance should include influencing the negotiation and compliance processes, access to information and participation in national reporting. To facilitate such participation, a database of civil society groups should be established and criteria for the involvement of civil society developed;
- (h) A steering committee for non-governmental organizations and civil society should be set up;
- (i) Training should be carried out on issues of compliance for government officials, civil society members and the judiciary;
- (j) Some UNEP activities, in particular special projects carried out by UNEP's unit on non-governmental organizations, could be carried out through the creation of trust funds.

Financing

41. UNEP was currently a sectoral-issue-oriented but low-profile organization. The issue was raised of whether a sectoral or cross-cutting organization was more effective. One reason for the lack of funds allocated to UNEP was the competitiveness among United-Nations-funded agencies and duplication of functions. A world environment organization might offer the advantage of having a more stable source of funds. Such an organization would be of greater interest to States if it took on critical roles such as dispute settlement and liability and redress. It would nevertheless be impossible to remove environmental issues from the mandates of other United Nations agencies such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

42. Many national committees of UNEP had not been very effective. It would be a good idea to revitalize them. One method could be to establish competitive small grant programmes.

43. Several sources of funding for UNEP were discussed: taxes, investment sector funding and investment guarantee systems. Some of those systems need to be studied further. Private-sector funding normally had two forms: direct contributions by the private sector or direct private investment in green enterprises and sustainable development. Other forms of private-sector funding were sponsorships and prizes. For UNEP to receive other types of private-sector funding, it would have to offer environmental goods and services.

44. The role of debt relief should be further studied: often debt payments had been funded by plundering the natural resource base of a country. If such money could be invested in the environment, all would benefit.

45. The general conclusion of this group was that UNEP should seek more sustainable and stable sources of finance.

Compliance

46. Compliance mechanisms were characterized as inadequate and even absent from some multilateral environmental agreements. The large number of such agreements was one of the obstacles to compliance and enforcement. Governments were overloaded by reporting requirements. In some cases, the obligations of various treaties even conflicted. Currently, it was mainly developing countries which were pressured to comply with agreements and threatened that aid would be withheld. Current dispute resolution mechanisms tended to favour economic interests rather than environmental concerns. Moreover, they focused on disputes between States rather than those in which transnational bodies were involved.

47. The group therefore recommended that:

(a) Whenever a multilateral environmental agreement is agreed on, compliance mechanisms should also be put in place at the same time. The compliance mechanisms should incorporate both incentives and sanctions;

(b) The role of information (reporting, verification, dissemination, etc.) should be promoted as a tool of compliance;

(c) Both developing and developed countries should be subject to the same formal and transparent compliance mechanisms, which must also contain dispute settlement provisions.

48. The group suggested that in the short term:

(a) The capacity of Governments, civil society and the secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements should be strengthened in the areas of information and verification;

(b) The capacity of the judiciary and civil society should be strengthened in international environmental law;

(c) Civil society should have direct access to dispute settlement;

(d) Like-minded countries should establish an alliance on critical compliance and enforcement issues.

49. The group made the following specific recommendations:

(a) A joint dialogue on international environmental governance should be convened to bring together the groups already consulted separately;

(b) A set of criteria for the major groups in the multi-stakeholder process should be developed;

(c) Various modalities of empowering civil society should be considered.

Visions for UNEP and its mandate

50. UNEP should retain its catalytic role and also seek to become an executing agency. It should be responsible for sustainable development rather than the environment in isolation. It should diversify and expand its governance structures to include representatives of civil society. It should allocate more responsibilities to partner non-governmental organizations and other agencies. It should assist Southern Governments to fulfil their reporting obligations (by making the obligations simpler), as well as to participate more effectively in global environmental negotiations. It should be fully transparent by making its budget information easily accessible. It should have predictable and sustainable funding to enable it to carry out its mission.

VIII. DISCUSSION OF THE REPORTS OF THE BREAKOUT GROUPS

51. Participants discussed some of the issues presented in the reports of the breakout groups and refined a few of the ideas. It was pointed out that many of the recommendations put forward represented the opinions of the majority of the members of a particular group, not necessarily all the members. An example was the recommendation that some of the functions of the Commission on Sustainable Development should be transferred to UNEP. Participants were, however, very reluctant to alter the wording of any of the major recommendations emanating from the groups.

52. The Rapporteurs of the breakout groups were requested to refine the reports in the light of the comments made by participants and to finalize them for presentation to the Civil Society Consultations on Ways and Means to Enhance the Active Engagement and Participation of Civil Society in the Work of UNEP which were to take place immediately following the present consultations, on 24 and 25 May 2001.

IX. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

53. The facilitators declared the meeting closed at 6.35 p.m. on 23 May 2001.
