

Bella Abzug tabled a draft decision on the role of Women in Environment and Development. The draft decision calls for the Secretary-General to ensure that key elements relating to women's critical economic, social and environmental contributions to sustainable development are mainstreamed in all the substantive work of the PrepCom.

As well, the draft decision calls for specific studies and expert group meetings involving NGOs to focus on Priority Areas for Women in Sustainable Development in addition to the impact of economic, environmental and development policies on women's participation in sustainable development.

The draft decision also calls for an evaluation of the impact of poverty and environmental degradation on women and children in view of the increasing feminization of poverty, the increase in low income female headed households and the vulnerability of women and children to becoming environmental refugees.

The final NGO intervention, prepared by the European Youth Forest Action, Canadian Youth and the Student Environment Action Coalition not only enjoyed the largest "scrum" but brought all delegations to applause. The intervention called on the PrepCom to fulfill the directive of the World Commission on Environment and Development and thus to address environment and development issues in a fully integrated manner. Any meaningful environmental protection measures must incorporate both imbalances in North-South relations and economic and cultural considerations. Moreover, solving the environmental crisis must first be preceded by resolution of the debt crisis.

The intervention called on the Secretariat and northern governments to follow the Youth sector's offer of providing free food and accommodation to anyone in need by ensuring adequate resources to enable southern and eastern participation at PrepCom III.