

- provide direction to the International Conference on Water and the Environment (ICWE) to be held in Dublin, to ensure that the Conference propose appropriate mechanisms for implementing, coordinating and funding the strategies and action programs which it will present to UNCED;
- through informal discussions, test the acceptability of potential options for improving implementation and co-ordination of water programs;
- ensure that Agenda 21 incorporates the need for participation of women and indigenous peoples in policy and decision making at the local, national, regional and international levels.

Some 50 statements were made by delegates and NGOs in the initial round of discussion, focusing mainly on the options for Agenda 21 document. There was broad agreement on the overall structure of the document and its program themes, which were derived from the review of the Mar del Plata Action Plan recently undertaken by the UN Inter-secretariat Group on water. However, several delegations, including Canada, pointed to inconsistencies between the Agenda 21 document and the document which describes the objectives and structure of the Dublin conference.

Many developing countries stressed that the developmental aspects of water resources management should receive more attention in Agenda 21, and that the absence of discussion on financial resources was a serious omission. Their position was that without the provision of resources, little practical progress in addressing water problems was likely.

Many interventions repeated or confirmed what was already in the document, for example:

- water should no longer be considered a free good;
- integrated water resources management should be the centrepiece of the freshwater chapter in Agenda 21;
- water conservation measures and the reduction of wastes should be encouraged;
- capacity for water resource monitoring and assessment, setting of quality and pollution control standards, and enforcement should be strengthened in many countries;