

OCEANS

The Oceans was characterized by different coalitions of forces around each of the program areas for oceans proposed for Agenda 21. Canada was principally interested in the sections dealing with living marine resources, where we sought to advance interests of coastal states in protecting straddling stocks; and in marine pollution, where we sought to follow up results of Halifax meeting on land based sources of marine pollution by drafting further guidelines for consideration by UNEP. The Canadian delegation chaired informal contact groups on both issues and drafted these sections of the Agenda 21 text. The most polemical oceans issues proved to be the sections of the text on Antarctica and on whaling. Other sections of the text that were actively debated dealt with management of coastal areas, climate change and sea level rise, and institutional issues. Three weeks of work were almost jettisoned in the final 24 hours as a result of a breakdown over how oceans text would be forwarded to the fourth PrepCom. In the end, agreement was reached that the Chairman of WGII would forward a compilation of different delegations proposals, plus the original Secretariat document.

INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

Institutional issues have been regarded as one of the three key cross-sectoral issues in the UNCED process (along with technology transfer and financial resources). Unfortunately, the discussion of institutions at this PrepCom was very preliminary. The Canadian delegation made two contributions to the discussion, by circulating in advance a discussion paper on institutional issues, outlining results of informal consultations in New York; and by producing a matrix of suggestions for institutional reforms that arise from the Secretariat documents on sectoral issues. The Canadian delegation also hosted a lunch to exchange views of delegations on means of strengthening UNEP. The Secretariat will build on Canadian matrix by compiling ideas for institutional reform that are emerging from discussion of sectoral environmental issues in Working Groups I and II. It remains to be seen at the fourth PrepCom what delegations really wish UNCED to accomplish in this area.

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER

The technology transfer issue got off to a more substantive start through negotiations on a draft decision proposed by G-77 and China. Among highlights in G-77 draft are: the need for technology capacity building in LDCs; the use of international data-bases to ensure LDCs access to scientific and technological information; purchasing patents with ODA for transfer to LDCs on non-commercial terms; developing safeguards on transfer of untested technologies, promoting long term technological partnerships on a commercial basis; promoting incentives in developed countries to stimulate technology transfer; establishing a global program of technology transfer by UN agencies; easing transfer of patents and period of patent protection. Japan, the US and Canada had difficulties with various parts of this text,