

Second, we will need some equivalent to Strong's global goals, if there is going to be any coherence in the priorities set for each chapter of Agenda 21. The Earth Charter should provide some guidance, but it will consist of universal principles, rather than global goals. It is not clear how or when such goals could be negotiated under the present process. This may prove to be a task left to the end for leaders at UNCED itself.

Third, Agenda 21 will need a review mechanism and some institutional framework. In the past, Strong has spoken of assigning this task to the office of the UN Director-General. The issue did not arise at this PrepCom, but it was flagged in a discussion paper circulated by the EC, which suggested a regular high-level body, meeting at the ministerial level, to give policy guidance for the implementation of Agenda 21. The EC also linked this idea to reviving a UN-wide environmental co-ordination board, to monitor progress within the UN system on implementing Agenda 21. These ideas are very similar to Canadian views on institutional issues and will need to be taken up in Working Group III at PrepCom IV.

Fourth, the PrepCom needs to find an appropriate level of detail for Agenda 21. Delegates in Working Group II found themselves completely bogged down when they tried to negotiate their way line by line through the Secretariat drafts on freshwater and wastes. Given the level of detail in the sectoral drafts, such a task is better left to technical working parties, rather than diplomatic fora such as an UNCED PrepCom. Unfortunately, this would entail ceding more authority to the Secretariat rather than less, contrary to delegations' clear preference at this PrepCom. The alternative is to reduce the number of programme areas, and describe both objectives and activities in a more general and more political fashion.

Finally, it is unclear what degree of political commitment is entailed in the signing of Agenda 21 by leaders in Rio de Janeiro. Will it be simply an indicative list of objectives and activities, or will it be a series of international commitments on which governments will be expected to deliver, domestically and internationally? Most delegations incline towards the former, but in Strong's vision, it is the latter. In the end, individual governments will probably determine their own level of commitment by the actions they take domestically to implement Agenda 21.