

2. Seek support for an international poverty focal point within an existing institution which would be part of an UNCED follow-up arrangement to track anti-poverty commitments and would act as a clearinghouse for successful anti-poverty programmes.

3. Propose a restructuring of the chapter to include a focus on international action which can be taken to ensure that poverty stays front and centre of the international agenda and that puts pressure on national governments to continue to address the issue of poverty within their national boundaries.

PREPCOM DISCUSSION

The poverty chapter was one of the weakest among the plenary documents but thanks to hard work by NGO and government delegates alike the final version of the chapter is considerably stronger. The structure of the chapter remains poor but all the essential concepts, objectives and programmes have been included. The negotiations on this section built on the good will developed during discussions on the health chapter and allowed for a good exchange of ideas between developed and developing countries.

The Canadian brief formed the basis for the joint CANZ intervention and many of the Canadian ideas were integrated into the final text: in particular the addition of an objective focusing on national development plans and budgets; the emphasis on establishing community-based mechanisms; the establishment of a focal point for information exchange; and the need to ensure that follow-up arrangements for UNCED include poverty eradication as a high priority.

The G77 also prepared detailed comments on the text which were in large part integrated. The most striking background work came from the NGO Poverty and Affluence Working Group (see document attached) who developed a few key ideas, presented them in a short document to all regional groupings as they were developing their positions. As a result all of the NGO ideas made their way into delegation interventions in one form or another to the great benefit of the chapter. Notable concepts included in the chapter from the NGOs are the need for empowering of communities, the need for a supportive international policy framework and the need for an examination of south/north financial flows.

The chapter also recognizes the need to focus capacity building at the local community level and to strengthen mechanisms to allow sharing of experience and knowledge