

do this work inter-sessionally. The Working Group also produced a covering decision document, providing guidance to the Dublin Conference and instructing the Secretariat to continue working on the Agenda 21 Freshwater options for PrepCom IV. The initial draft decision document was prepared by the European Community, drawing upon a Canadian draft and was wholly satisfactory to Canada.

The product of the Freshwater drafting group effectively tested the PrepCom III process for Working Group II, in that it was the first to go to informal consultations of the full Working Group. Language not agreed, or not fully developed, at the end of the process would remain in square brackets for PrepCom IV consideration. It quickly became apparent that the drafting group documents would not have a smooth passage. Most of the proposed revisions addressed the points raised during the initial debate described above. Developing countries' concerns about resources to undertake the proposed activities and Malaysia's insistence on including Antarctica, however obliquely, in the Freshwater Agenda 21 were the subject of a lengthy discussion.

The Tunisian delegation stated, on behalf of 28 developing countries, that for Freshwater and all other issues, unless each programme area had a section on means of implementation, clearly identifying the need *inter alia* for new and additional financial resources and the transfer of technology, the entire document would have to be square bracketed. The Malaysian delegation proposed several additions referring to "potential" water sources (i.e. Antarctica) which was resisted each time by the German delegation. Several other proposals required a significant re-ordering of the text, and many interventions had implications for the structure of the Dublin Conference.

At the end of the informal consultations, after laborious negotiation much of the document remained in square brackets and, as with all issues, the critical aspects of financial and technological means to implement the activities remain for PrepCom IV to tackle.

In the final formal meeting of the Working Group, which is normally a straightforward gaveling through of the documents negotiated in the informal consultations, India challenged the role of the Dublin Conference as it relates to UNCED. Citing concern for the proliferation of experts' meetings, and the severe strain on developing countries' capacity to participate, India was intent on keeping the UNCED process as self-contained as possible. Its proposed revisions to the decision document providing guidance to Dublin would, in effect, decouple Dublin from UNCED: Dublin would be invited to "consider" the outcome of PrepCom III and submit a report to PrepCom IV, but would not be invited to identify options or concentrate on any particular aspects, such as implementation mechanisms. Canada opposed the Indian proposals, reiterating its wish to see that the Dublin Conference provide the benefit of focused consideration of the critical issues identified at PrepCom III, so that the product of Dublin would in turn benefit as much as possible PrepCom IV. After private discussions, compromise language was reached. Dublin