

Role of non-state actors: The importance of including the perspective of NGOs, scientific and business communities was stressed by a surprisingly large number of delegations (e.g. Peru, Tanzania, Philippines), as essential to achieve sustainable development. Tanzania went so far as to say that NGOs should participate at both deliberative and operational level, while Peru proposed an UNCED follow-up process which would explicitly include transnational corporations in environmental decision-making. WEOG delegations emphasized the need to link UN activities with multilateral development bank activities.

Role of regional organizations: A number of speakers noted the need to undertake capacity building through support to regional institutions. Bangladesh proposed that the regional commissions play a major role in the implementation of Agenda 21.

Prevention and Settlement of Disputes:

Austria, speaking on behalf of the Hexagonale (formerly Pentagonale) countries (Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Italy, Poland, and Yugoslavia) reiterated its PrepCom II proposal on establishing mechanisms for dispute prevention and settlement. The delegate stated they intended to present a decision to the PrepCom, recommending that the UNCED Secretariat do further work on this issue for PrepCom IV.

The US stated its strong support for the development of dispute settlement mechanisms, but signalled a concern regarding the establishment of free-standing and compulsory procedures under a single institution and questioned their utility outside of specific treaties. Several countries, such as Colombia, Finland, and Pakistan commented positively on the desirability of dispute resolution mechanisms and recognized the need for more work in this area. India reiterated that the examination of dispute resolution was somewhat premature, given diverse opinions and scientific uncertainties about what constitutes "an environmental breach," but noted that efforts should be made to ensure that dispute settlement is an intrinsic part of international agreements.

OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT

It remains to be seen when the first moves, if any, will be made by delegations to negotiate concrete steps to enhancing the UN's (and other international organizations') abilities to promote sustainable development. The issue is complicated by the fact that the UN is engaged in a process of reform and revitalization, including in its economic and social sectors; that developing countries see institutional change solely in terms of linkages to new arrangements for financing and technology transfer; and that any final decision on institutions may necessarily have to be made at the Summit level in Rio de Janeiro. Thus, the Chairman of Working Group III issued a summary (L.10) and the Working Group decided the following: