

Committee on Trade and Environment

UNEP STATEMENT

Statement by UNEP at the Regular Session of the
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Paragraph 33

I. CAPACITY BUILDING

1. In late November 2002, in collaboration with UNCTAD, the Capacity Building Task Force (CBTF) on Trade, Environment and Development, conducted a needs assessment and capacity building workshop in Fiji, back-to-back with the WTO regional seminar in Suva. The outputs from this meeting are to be found on the CBTF website at www.unep-unctad.org/cbtf. We will be following up this workshop with concrete activities in the region, as we have recently secured additional finance.

2. UNEP also convened a capacity building meeting on 27-28 March in Mexico City, to contribute to the development of a capacity building programme on Environment, Trade and Sustainable Development for the LAC region. The agenda and background papers can be found on the UNEP website at www.unep.ch/etu, where a full report of the meeting will shortly be posted. We will be using the outcome, in particular from the working groups, to which the Canadian delegate referred, to develop more specific proposals for concrete activities in that region.

3. With regard to our next proposed event, which was a High Level Forum on Environment, Trade and Sustainable Development, which was due to be held in Seoul, Korea on 12-14 May, we regret this has had to be postponed due to the ongoing SARS crisis. The meeting, which is co-sponsored by the Korean Ministry of Environment, is being rescheduled and invitees will be informed of the new dates once they are set.

4. In collaboration again with UNCTAD, UNEP will hold a further CBTF workshop in Cape Town, South Africa on 22 May, once again back-to-back with WTO regional seminar on trade and environment, this time for anglophone African countries. This workshop will undertake a capacity building needs assessment for the countries participating. There will also be a focus on the effects of environmental requirements on market access, integrated assessment of trade policies, and a follow up to an earlier CBTF policy dialogue on promoting production and trade in organic agricultural products.

5. UNEP is currently preparing training materials on integrated assessment, enhancing synergies between MEAs and the WTO, and liberalisation of environmental goods and services. The first of these documents will be available by the middle of this year, and UNEP would like to thank Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, and Environment Canada, for the financial support that has enabled their production.

II. INTEGRATED ASSESSMENT

6. UNEP is developing a framework for Integrated Assessment and Planning for Sustainable Development. A UNEP workshop on this issue took place in Chavanne-de-Bogis on 13-14 February to initiate development of this framework, which aims to help governments better integrate economic and environment-related policies to achieve sustainable development objectives. An initial outline of the framework was reviewed at this meeting, and second draft of this is being produced on the basis of this review.

7. UNEP is also pleased to announce that it has recently received additional financial support from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to develop a stronger focus on poverty alleviation in its work on integrated assessment and the design of policy responses to assessments. This finance will support work at the national level in eight countries, applying assessment techniques and designing policies to support sustainable development from the results of those assessments. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Government of Norway for that support

III. ECONOMIC INSTRUMENTS

8. A draft of a UNEP paper on the role of economic instruments in biodiversity related MEAs was reviewed in a workshop that took place in Geneva on 17-18 February. A revision of this paper is due to be published in June this year. A future paper will examine the use of economic instruments in the context of MEAs which aim to reduce pollution from hazardous chemicals, such as the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions. This work on economic instruments is supported by studies undertaken at the national level on the design, application and effectiveness of economic instruments in achieving environmental goals. This programme of work is increasingly taking account of poverty alleviation and other development goals in a range of macroeconomic policy contexts.
