UNEP/IEG

Draft Recommendations Approved

Against the backdrop of the preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) adopted at its twenty-first session Decision 21/21, entitled 'International Environmental Governance.' This enabled the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Group of Ministers or Their Representatives (IGM) to undertake a comprehensive policy-oriented assessment of existing institutional weaknesses as well as future needs and options for strengthened international environmental governance, including the financing of the United Nations Environment Programme. This was with a view to presenting a report containing analysis and options to the next session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, to be held in February 2002 in Cartagena.

Five meetings of IGM/IEG have taken place. The first was on 18 April 2001 in New York, and this was followed by a meeting in Bonn on 17 July 2001 (see *Environmental Policy & Law*, Vol. 31, nos 4-5 at page 194). The third meeting took place on 9-10 September 2001 in Algiers (see *Environmental Policy & Law*, Vol. 31, no. 6 at page 266), and the fourth from 30 November to 1 December 2001 in Montreal. The penultimate meeting of the Intergovernmental Group was convened in New York on 25 January 2002.

The third meeting was presented with suggestions from the President of the Governing Council in the form of 'building blocks', which were discussed in two working groups. Working Group I addressed the role and the structure of the GMEF and strengthening the role, authority and financial situation of UNEP, while Working Group II addressed improved coordination and coherence among multilateral environmental agreements and enhanced coordination across the UN system – the role of the Environment Management Group. The meetings also benefited from valuable input from UNEP's Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) and generated a number of conclusions that provide a sense of what the expectations are in this process, and of the areas where consensus is emerging. Among the conclusions adopted were the following:

1. The IEG process encompasses all international environmental efforts and arrangements within the UN system, including at the regional level, and is not restricted to UNEP.
2. The process should be evolutionary in nature and be based on implementing General Assembly resolution

0378-777X/01/$12.00 © 2002 IOS Press

53/242. A prudent approach to institutional change is required, with preference given to making better use of existing structures.
3. The meetings on international environmental governance should lead to comprehensive input into the preparations for the Johannesburg Summit, which should be presented for consideration by it. Decision 10/1 of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), which invited the UNEP Governing Council to submit its progress report/results to the Preparatory Committee at its second session and the final results to the third session so that they can be fully considered in the preparatory process, clearly establishes this link.
4. Any new IEG system should take into account the needs and constraints of developing countries on the basis of common but differentiated responsibility.
5. As the principal United Nations body in the field of the environment, UNEP should be strengthened. This requires a clear solution to the issue of adequate, stable and predictable financing.
6. The clustering approach to multilateral environmental agreements holds some promise, and issues relating to the location of secretariats, meeting agendas and programmatic cooperation between such bodies and with UNEP should be addressed.

The conclusions from the first three meetings of the IGM/IEG were further synthesised and presented in an amended version, which included an additional 'building block' on capacity building, technology transfer and country-level coordination for the environmental pillar of sustainable development. The Montreal meeting also used a working group format, during which Working Group I discussed the role and structure of the GMEF. Working Group II addressed improved coherence and coordination among MEAs, the role of the EMG and capacity building, technology transfer and country-level coordination for the environmental pillar of sustainable development. Working Group III focused on strengthening the financial situation of UNEP. The outcome of the Montreal meeting reflects substantial progress in reaching agreement on the recommendations (see document UNEP/IGM/5/2).

Courtesy: UNEP Industry and Environment

On 25 January 2001 in New York, the President of the UNEP Governing Council presented his draft report for consideration by the Open-ended Intergovernmental Group of Ministers or their Representatives on International Environmental Governance. In his statement, David Anderson said that he looked forward to the final IEG meeting and seventh special session of the GC/GMEF in Cartagena, Colombia, from 13-15 February 2002. The draft recommendations have now been further amended and attempt to capture emerging consensus reached in the IEG process to date. They are listed under six main headings:

1. Improved international environmental policy making – the role and structure of the Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GMEF).
2. Strengthening the role, authority and financial situation of UNEP.
3. Improved coordination and coherence between multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs).
4. Capacity-building, technology transfer and country-level coordination for the environment pillar of sustainable development.
5. Enhanced coordination across the United Nations system – the role of the Environmental Management Group.
6. Future perspectives.

Several policy options and approaches are discussed under each heading. These draft recommendations will be presented to the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum for its consideration in Cartagena. Recommendations on IEG will be formally adopted at the meeting for transfer to the third preparatory session of the WSSD.

UNEP's Executive Director Klaus Töpfer expressed confidence that participants would reach a constructive final decision in Cartagena. With regard to UNEP financing, Klaus Töpfer said that UNEP urgently required a solution following many years of requests by the Governing Council for stable and predictable funding.

President Anderson underlined the view of the UNEP Governing Council that International Environmental Governance should be seen within the broad context of multilateral efforts to achieve sustainable development. He said that he would continue to undertake intersessional discussions with interested delegations up to 12 February, the date of the final session of the Intergovernmental Group of Ministers.

We shall report on the outcome of the Cartagena meeting. (MJ)

0378-777X/01/$12.00 © 2002 IOS Press