

**Statement by the Chinese Delegation at the Informal Consultation of the
GA on Institutional Framework for the UN's Environmental Activities**
Sept. 10, 2007

Mr. Chairman,

It gives me great pleasure to participate in this informal consultation on the institutional framework for the UN's environmental activities. I wish to thank the co-chairs for their diligent work in preparing the informative and comprehensive paper, which provides member states with a good basis for further discussion. My delegation associates itself with the statement made by Pakistan on behalf of the G-77 and China. Now I'd like to make four preliminary remarks on this paper:

First, China supports in principle the strengthening of connection and coordination among various environmental agencies and the improvement of international environmental governance (IEG). There are currently many multilateral environmental agencies whose mandates cover wide-ranging areas, but they lack adequate mutual coordination and connection. This has resulted in overlapping of certain environmental activities and waste of resources, which, together with mal-coordination, have reduced the effectiveness of work. In order to address this problem, it is highly necessary to strengthen coordination and cooperation among various agencies. However, the question of environment is in essence one of development, so the relevant reform must always be in light of the overall framework of sustainable development and be carried out in the general context of the UN reform in the field of economic and social development. We should proceed from the consensus reached at the 1992 UNCED and the 2002 Johannesburg Summit, explore in a balanced and comprehensive manner specific measures for strengthening the UN's environmental activities with a view to ensuring the coordinated development of the three pillars of economic development, social progress and environmental protection.

Secondly, it is necessary to set short-term and long-term goals for the reform of the IEG system and carry out the reform in a step by step manner. Currently, our focus should be enhancing the role of UNEP and improving its efficiency and capacity. UNEP is a good platform for the international community to engage in comprehensive discussion of issues related to environment and has made its contributions to the cause of environmental protection, particularly by providing policy recommendations and technical advice. It has great potentials as the specialized agency of the UN in the field

of environment and sustainable development. Yet for a long time it lacks adequate mandate and needs institutional capacity building. Our reform effort should focus on further strengthening the capacity of UNEP in view of the requests of the WSSD and the new developments in economic, social and developmental areas so that it can play a more effective role. Since other relevant UN agencies have their respective unique roles and advantages, they shouldn't be integrated just for the sake of integration. Instead, they should strengthen mutual cooperation and coordination so that they can collaborate while operating within their respective mandates, thus working together to improve efficiency and increase synergy. As for the establishment of UNEO, further in-depth study and full discussions are still needed in view of the considerable divergence of views.

Thirdly, we should take into full account the legal autonomy of and institutional difference among various multilateral environmental agreements, take a practical approach, engage in full consultations and progress in an orderly and gradual manner. The General Assembly should not set an artificial timeline for the clustering of the multilateral environmental agreements. The biggest problem facing multilateral environmental conventions is the lack of capacity and resources on the part of the developing countries. Only when this problem is effectively addressed can the implementation of the conventions be ensured and positive results produced. The explicit measures of thematic clustering proposed in the paper are quite far from the current collaboration process involving the three chemicals and waste conventions. Those measures are hardly operable and fail to take into consideration the difficulty in implementation coordination at the national level.

Fourthly, strengthening the capacity building of and financial support for the developing countries is a priority in our discussion of the institutional framework for the UN's environmental activities. The developing countries which make up the majority of the world's population are the most vulnerable to environmental degradation and face the most difficulties. One important measurement of the effectiveness of the IEG is whether the current mechanisms can be strengthened to be able to provide technical assistance to the developing countries and help them build integrated capacity to respond to environmental challenges.

The paper proposed actions in seven building blocks, but in our view, those seven aspects are lack of balance, with no substantive solution is proposed regarding questions of concern to the developing countries such as

capacity building and financial support. With regard to ways to increase financing for the UN environmental agreements, there are unfortunately no substantive recommendations. The international community, the developed countries in particular, should take effective measures to increase ODA, boost up financial support for UNEP in order to improve its financial situation, provide stable, adequate and predictable financial backing for the international cooperation in the field of environment and development, and transfer to the developing countries advanced, environmentally-friendly technologies on preferential terms.

As for the Global Environmental Facilities (GEF), it is our view that in evaluating its effect, attention should be given to the real capability of the recipient countries in project organization as well as in cooperation and communication with international agencies. We believe that the project approval procedure of the GEF should be further simplified and efficiency improved. Caution needs to be exercised in adding new focal areas for the GEF to avoid affecting the current six areas. While it is a good thing to increase funding for the GEF, its materialization depends mainly on the political will of the developed countries for increasing donations and their concrete action in this regard. We also believe that UNEP should have a bigger say in the allocation of resources of the GEF.

Mr. Chairman,

Protection of environment and realization of sustainable development are China's basic national policy. China supports the improvement of the IEG and attaches importance to the consultations on the institutional framework for the UN's environmental activities. We appreciate and support the work of the co-chairs and are willing to take an active part in the relevant discussions as part of our efforts in promoting sustainable development.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.