

INFORMAL ENCOUNTER ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Oslo, Norway, 28 February - 1 March 1991

This summary has been prepared by the UNCTAD secretariat in the context of its preparations for UNCTAD VIII and is being circulated for the convenience of delegations. It does not purport to be a comprehensive account of the views expressed by participants, nor does it necessarily reflect the views of the secretariat.

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## INTRODUCTION

1. In the context of the preparations for UNCTAD VIII undertaken by the UNCTAD secretariat, independent and government experts, as well as representatives of intergovernmental organizations, participated in their personal capacity in an informal encounter on "International Trade and the Environment", which was held in Oslo on 28 February and 1 March 1991 (list of participants attached). The purpose of the Encounter was to promote an exchange of views on the impact of environmental concerns on the elaboration of trade policies and the evolution of international trade relations. It also discussed the issue of financial transfer of resources for environment and development. The Encounter was organized by UNCTAD in cooperation with the Government of Norway, which hosted and financed this event.

### I. GENERAL ISSUES ON ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

2. The participants highlighted that there is a growing consciousness of the fact that the world is one, which implies that the international community must embark on an active negotiating phase on environmental problems. In this context, the new decade offers an opportunity to translate into effective policy, aimed at sustainable development, the growing awareness that further damage to the environment will threaten the survival of mankind.

3. A number of countries face environmental problems of a local, national or regional nature. Moreover, the number of global and common problems is steadily increasing. They are often interrelated and both require concerted efforts from the international community as a whole. However, the Encounter pointed out that the priority concerns in the North and in the South were different: alerted by the effect of their own production and consumption patterns, the industrialized countries seek to prevent a further degradation of the global environment; the developing countries, for their part, are primarily concerned by the major economic and social problems they face in terms of poverty and development.

4. In view of these different priorities vis-à-vis a real and common problem, the participants expressed the general view that a better understanding between countries and groups of countries has to be developed. This understanding calls for a political approach and could be built up on the basis of the following elements:

- Industrialized countries carry the main responsibility for the creation of most major environmental problems and they are in a far better position to generate the financial and technological means for solving these problems;
- Poverty is at the core of unsustainability in developing countries: it aggravates the environmental problems by increasing the pressure on the natural resource base whilst it impedes a growth and development process which would have the capacity to respond to the concerns for environment;
- Reverse capital flows, mainly due to several external constraints - debt servicing, protectionism in developed countries, low commodity prices and subsequent deterioration of terms of trade - further affect the possibilities of sustained growth and strengthen the pressure on environment by increasing the need for foreign earnings in developing countries.

5. In view of these elements, the main challenge is to manage the dilemma between environment and development needs. In order to face such a challenge, three main orientations to promote were highlighted by the participants:

- Industrialized countries should take the necessary action to solve environmental problems in their own countries;
- Poverty eradication and the restoration of growth are basic conditions for launching a successful process of sustainable development in developing countries;
- Developing countries should contribute to the solution of global environmental concerns whilst the relevant measures to be taken should not constitute an additional burden for them: this implies additional financial resources from industrialized countries as well as an improved access to technologies; it also implies agreement on setting different environmental targets for developing countries as well as different time-frames for their achievement.

6. It was largely recognized that, in order to be effectively implemented and bear positive environmental results at the global level, such orientations call for a multifaceted "development contract" between industrialized and developing countries, based on the principle of shared responsibility and involving new partnerships between the different groups of decision makers.

7. In the framework of this global approach, the discussion focused on three main sets of environmental policies: (i) action through economic and regulatory tools; (ii) the development of environmentally sound technologies; (iii) the promotion of environmentally sound products.

(i) Action through economic and regulatory tools

8. The participants underlined that much theoretical work has been conducted regarding the need to use economic tools in order to correct market deficiencies by internalizing externalities related to environment. The general view was that the practicability of such instruments has not been explored to the same extent. It is therefore important to study in which cases and on which conditions the use of economic tools can be efficient from an environmental point of view, as well as to examine the possibilities of harmonization between countries in order to avoid trade distortions. Some participants felt that it was preferable to use incentives - e.g. fiscal advantages for companies - rather than disincentives such as taxes, which may create rigidities and greater distortive effects.

9. The Encounter also discussed the question of norms and standards aiming at achieving different types of environmental purposes: limiting the use of fossil energy and controlling the emission of pollutants; ensuring sustainability in resource management; and, establishing environmental standards for the use and disposal of products. Concern was expressed about the risk of proliferation of such norms and regulations. However, they were considered as necessary and the discussion focused on the way to harmonize them, mainly through international agreements, whilst introducing a degree of differentiation between countries.

10. It was felt that, at least in some developing countries, overall levels of environmentally damaging activities are relatively low in relation to the assimilative capacity of their environment and stock of natural resources. Adequate environmental protection can therefore be achieved with control measures which are less stringent than in developed countries. On the other hand, developing country participants mentioned that in certain cases, higher standards might be necessary in developing countries because of the high dependence of the population on the natural resource base for their survival. Participants generally agreed that, whilst the harmonization of norms is desirable, it should not prevent introducing a degree of differentiation in their application, depending on the environmental stress of the countries. The implementation of norms would then be tailored to each set of environmental conditions. In this context, the participants recognized that financial and technical assistance is indispensable for those developing countries which need to meet fairly high environmental standards in some of their productive activities.

(ii) Access to environmentally sound technologies

11. The implementation of environmental norms depends mainly on the development and use of environmentally sound technologies in all countries. The latter play a key role in reconciling the need for sustained growth and the concern for global environmental problems. The Encounter underlined the importance of improving the access of developing countries to technologies enabling them to avoid pollution, to replace fossil fuels with renewable energy sources, and to respect the ecological cycles of natural resources.

12. The view was expressed that in many sectors of activities, including the agricultural sector, the technologies in order to meet these concerns are simultaneously capital-, science- and management-intensive. As this situation may create problems of access for certain countries and populations, other technologies should also be used and developed, locally or internationally. In any case, it is necessary to avoid the transfer of obsolete technologies to developing countries and to facilitate their access to state of the art technologies.

13. Companies constitute an important source of pollution and at the same time, they are the main actors able to promote the technologies needed for facing global environmental problems. The participants stressed that their commitment should be sought to develop these technologies and to transfer them to developing countries.

14. It was observed that a large percentage of international technology transfer takes place within firms, which constitutes an obstacle to an open trade in technologies. This problem is aggravated in the case of environment related technologies: as most of them are new, they often are "locked up" in enterprises while older technologies are more easily and freely available.

15. Governments have the responsibility of setting up a scientific, legal and economic framework to promote clean and resource efficient technologies. It was the general view of the participants that cooperative efforts between public authorities and private companies should be developed in this framework. In particular, Governments should set up different types of incentives aiming at stimulating technological innovation in the field of environment by companies, whilst the latter should comply with the established norms and regulations.

16. Similar cooperative efforts have to be undertaken at the international level and it was suggested that UNCTAD contribute to reviving the dialogue on the transfer of technology around environmental concerns. A major component of this dialogue would then be to determine a good balance between the protection of technological innovation and the larger diffusion of basic, environmentally sound technologies.

17. Finally, the Encounter underlined the need for financial and technical assistance to developing countries to help them to gain access to such technologies and to enlarge the corresponding skill and knowledge base required at the national and local levels.

(iii) The promotion of environmentally sound products

18. Recycling is a key element in environmental sustainability, especially in industrialized countries. Even if the problem of pollution through product processing were solved, that of end-use products would remain. The participants recognized that, for the time being, it is difficult to assess to the extent to which natural products could substitute for products which could be recycled. They felt therefore that, in view of its importance, the issue of new end-uses with commercial significance should be fully explored. The analysis in this respect should not be limited to the technical possibilities: it should also examine which economic mechanisms (prices, taxes) would be the most efficient to favour the substitution process, as well as which policies developing countries should design for using the new export opportunities opened up by such a process.

19. The Encounter expressed the general view that a multifaceted and intensive system of information plays a key role in adopting a dynamic approach to issues (i), (ii) and (iii) above and thus in promoting sustainable development.

20. In order to induce an effective shift in production and consumption patterns, information efforts should be fostered in various directions, addressing the relevant target groups on the following issues: the risks attached to environmentally harmful product processing and end-use products; the subsequent need for enforcing energy-saving and anti-pollution norms and standards at the national and local level; the measures necessary to prevent ecological catastrophes and mitigate their effects; building of awareness on the carrying capacities of ecosystems and the advantages linked to sound management of the natural resource base; and the training systems to develop for extending the use of clean and resource efficient technologies.

21. Environment related information needs to be widely diffused through various channels, in particular in the media, in curricula and at the work place. It therefore requires joint efforts from Governments, communication networks, consumer associations and other committed economic and social actors. The objective is then to strengthen the diffusion of competence and information in a transparent way, in both industrialized and developing countries, in order to enlighten any decision-making having environmental implications.

## II. ENVIRONMENT AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

22. With regard to the interlinkage between environment and international trade, participants discussed four main issues: (i) the effect of trade liberalization on the environment; (ii) the setting up of environmental standards and regulations; (iii) the use of trade measures for environmental purposes; (iv) guiding principles and rules for environment related trade measures.

### (i) Effects of trade on the environment

23. A basic question in the ongoing debate on the subject is the effect of trade liberalization on the environment. Some participants underlined the risk of excessive exploitation of natural resources if liberalization prevented the internalization of environmental costs. In the field of commodities, examples were given of increased export supply in response to low export prices, aggravating resource degradation in developing countries.

24. It was however, underlined that liberalization of international trade could have positive effects. Improved access of developing countries to developed countries' markets for their processed and manufactured products should allow for diversification of exports and subsequently diminish the excessive dependence of a few primary commodities. Reference was also made to the agricultural sector. Removal or reduction of protectionist measures in this sector would result in higher and more stable world market prices, thus creating better conditions for sustainable land management in exporting countries.

25. On the basis of these considerations, it was widely accepted that trade liberalization does not conflict with sustainable development, provided certain accompanying measures were taken at the international level. Two of them were highlighted:

- (a) Developing countries should benefit from appropriate technical and financial assistance, including the transfer of technologies on fair and favourable terms, in order to offset the detrimental trade effects resulting from changes in resource exploitation patterns;
- (b) Commodity agreements should be reviewed in the light of their potential contribution to sustainable development in developing countries. Reference was made to the International Tropical Timber Agreement, which is the first commodity agreement recognizing the need for ecologically sustained resource management. This approach should however be strengthened by making the link with the need for remunerative prices. Other commodity agreements could be modernized along similar lines. It was suggested that UNCTAD take up this issue by studying the possibilities of integrating the dimensions of resource management, pricing and technical assistance in the framework of commodity agreements.

### (ii) Environmental standards and regulations

26. The Encounter discussed the issue of harmonization of environmental standards and regulations in a trade perspective. Some participants felt that harmonization, by masking comparative advantages, could be detrimental to developing countries. This approach is consistent with the view, expressed

earlier, that standards should be differentiated in practice, according to prevailing national or local conditions, in particular the degree of environmental stress in developing countries. However, other participants felt that harmonization might be preferred from the trade point of view, as it would make it more difficult to institute non-tariff barriers for environmental reasons.

27. In any case, there was a strong consensus that clear principles and practices should be established (see section (iv) below) in order to avoid the use of standards and regulations as a pretext for introducing discriminatory measures and disguised barriers to trade. Moreover, it was stated that various possibilities exist to set environmental standards respectful of trade and competition rules. In this respect, giving as an example the tourist sector in the Caribbean, it was suggested that minimum environmental standards could be set for certain groups of comparable countries so as to avoid excessive degradation of the environment without changing relative competitive positions.

(iii) The use of trade measures for environmental purposes

28. Most of these measures consist in non tariff barriers and they are used for a wide variety of purposes, on the basis of national regulations or international agreements.

29. Individual countries have the right to establish health and other standards for goods sold in their markets and these standards also apply to imports. This constitutes a point of entry for adopting trade measures vis-à-vis exporting countries which do not comply with domestic environmental standards, in particular in the field of product use or disposal. Moreover, a number of international conventions on environment include product specific trade measures in order to achieve their objectives. The Washington Convention on endangered species and the Montreal Protocol on the ozone layer were mentioned in this respect. The discussion also referred to the current negotiations on climate change which could lead to a number of trade policy measures.

30. Particular attention was paid to the problem of non-participants in an international agreement. For example, the Montreal Protocol includes provisions which require member countries to ban imports and exports of, inter alia, ozone-depleting substances from non-member countries. Some of these trade-related provisions have prompted an unconcluded legal debate concerning their conformity with GATT rules.

31. At the Encounter, it was widely accepted that in case of conflict, international environment agreements could prevail over GATT rules in order to prevent an outlet for free-riders and a proliferation of harmful products, provided that these agreements were ratified by a large number of countries. The compelling component of an agreement is particularly needed when it relates to a patent ecological danger as in the case of transport of hazardous products and toxic waste. More generally, it was felt that the rights of individual countries under the principle of national sovereignty had to be reconciled with the concept of shared responsibility with regard to global environmental issues.

32. In view of the increasing importance of transfrontier and global environment problems, it is expected that other international instruments will be negotiated in the coming years. Their trade implications should be

carefully examined in the elaboration phase and regularly monitored in the implementation phase. Moreover, a first assessment of trade measures already taken nationally or multilaterally for environmental purposes could be made in relation to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to take place in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

(iv) Guiding principles and rules for environment related trade measures

33. The participants highlighted the following principles and rules which should guide any trade measures taken on the ground of environmental concerns:

(a) Non discrimination

34. Basic GATT rules on non-discrimination in trade measures are relevant for environmental purposes. They stipulate that measures "must not result in arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination between countries where the same conditions prevail" and that they should not be a disguised restriction on international trade. Taking up this principle, the participants stressed that environmental regulations should not act as non-tariff barriers by using minor differences in environmental characteristics between imported and domestically produced products in order to favour domestic products.

(b) Appropriateness

35. Some participants observed that trade measures might not be the most appropriate instruments of environmental policies or might even act as a hindrance to better resource management. The case of elephant products was mentioned in this regard. Under the pressure of their public opinion, some member countries of the Washington Convention on endangered species have applied the ban on ivory trade irrespective of the domestic policies of the originating countries. While the elephant population has drastically decreased in some countries, ivory trade in others has provided resources for wildlife conservation projects and sustainable development of elephant populations. It also provided incentives to local communities to participate in the conservation of the elephant. Another case where trade measures might be seen as inappropriate is the restriction of imports in the United States of tuna fish originating from Mexico (based on dolphin kills).

(c) Proportionality

36. The Encounter underlined that the proportionality principle should be applied where trade instruments for environmental purposes are deemed necessary. This principle would require countries, in adopting new mandatory standards relating to the protection of the environment, to assess whether their "trade restrictive effects" are proportional to the "legitimate objectives" of the proposed regulation.

(d) Scientific evidence and precautionary principle

37. This assessment should be made on the basis of scientific evidence. However, participants recognized that sometimes decisions had to be taken in situations of uncertainty. When a serious environmental risk existed, the precautionary principle should be applied to the setting of standards and of the relevant implementation measures. In order to avoid an overestimate of risks, scientific evidence had to be fostered and the view was expressed that enterprises could contribute to this requirement, taking into account their scientific and technical knowledge.

(e) Notification and transparency

38. Participants stressed the need for increasing information and transparency on trade measures related to environment. They also stressed the importance of an adequate notification of national regulations which are not based on international environmental standards. These regulations should therefore follow the procedure defined in the GATT Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade which requires countries to notify them in draft form so that other countries can comment on them.

39. The need for an effective monitoring of environment related trade measures was also underlined and it was suggested that UNCTAD adjust its Trade Control Measures Information System accordingly.

40. In conclusion on this section the Encounter expressed the general view that, as far as possible, trade measures for environmental purposes should be avoided. When they are necessary, they should follow the above-mentioned principles and rules. It was added that it might be necessary to further clarify GATT rules with respect to environment. The General Agreement could integrate the concept of sustainable development, using as a model, its Part IV, which recognizes the link between trade and development. Generally, any international environmental provision should as far as possible conform to GATT. There should be broad guidelines in GATT and specific provisions in environmental agreements.

### III. FINANCING GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

41. Tabled for consideration was a discussion paper entitled "Financial resources for environment and development for national and global purposes: The need to ensure genuine additionality", prepared by the Government of Norway. Discussions focused on the principle of additionality in aid flows and possible mechanisms for its verification; the importance of global funding mechanisms; conditionalities in aid and development finance; the need for dual-purpose automatic funding mechanisms that would ensure environmental conservation and the transfer of resources to developing countries; the potential impact of debt reduction operations on environmental protection, and the role of the private sector.

#### 1. Additionality

42. An appropriate definition of additionality was considered to be "financial resources in addition to and separate from regular development assistance". It was noted that the need to provide additional resources had been recognized repeatedly by all countries.<sup>1/</sup> This was considered crucial in order to safeguard resources for the fight against poverty as well as ensuring adequate financing for basic social, economic and local environmental needs of developing countries; and in order to ensure transparency in aid flows. It was also noted that many OECD countries are still well short of meeting their ODA commitments to the least developed countries and other developing countries. Unless additionality was ensured there was a danger that resources would be diverted from national/local developmental priorities to global environmental ones and from low-income to middle-income countries.

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<sup>1/</sup> See, for example, in General Assembly resolution 44/228; the Bergen Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Development in the ECE Region in May 1990; the Ministerial Declaration from the Second World Climate Conference in November 1990; and the Communiqué from the OECD Environment Ministerial Meeting in January 1991.

43. In the discussion of additionality for environmental purposes a distinction should be made between financing of measures to combat local, national and regional environmental problems, and global environmental problems.

44. Strong arguments existed in favour of the transfer of financial resources for global environmental purposes in addition to resources for economic and social development, including:

- (i) Developing countries have had a limited responsibility for the global environmental problems up to now, as a group and per capita;
- (ii) The main purpose of transferring financial and other resources was to protect the global environment in an effective manner, and not specifically to promote economic and social welfare in recipient countries, which was one of the three central criteria for ODA classification. Resources were transferred to developing countries because this was a cost-effective way to deal with global environmental problems, and not because they are developing countries. Such transfers benefit all, and not any particular country or region;
- (iii) Because of their relative importance with regard to emissions, a large share of investments to protect the global environment would most probably be made in middle-income countries, resulting in the availability of fewer resources for development to low-income countries;
- (iv) The resources were intended to cover the incremental costs for developing countries of choosing alternatives more favourable to the global environment.

45. Some participants felt that it was of the highest importance that donors should devise appropriate mechanisms to ensure genuine additionality and to facilitate its verification. One way of doing this would be to establish funding mechanisms for global environmental purposes that would be separate from existing mechanisms for traditional development assistance. Norway's International Climate Fund was cited as a useful example. Some participants were of the view that verification of additionality could be further enhanced if in the presentation of statistics by donor countries financial data pertaining to traditional ODA were kept separate from those pertaining to resource flows for global environmental purposes. In addition, a review process should be instituted to enable recipients and donors to undertake an in-depth examination of the additionality question and related issues.

## 2. Financing mechanisms

46. Ensuring automaticity of aid flows was considered essential to the security of environmental projects, many of which required long gestation and maturity periods.

### (i) Sectoral mechanisms

47. Two practical examples of follow-up to the general intentions contained in the various resolutions and declarations on the environment were the Ozone Fund under the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer and the Global Environment Facility managed by the World Bank, UNEP and UNDP.

Several countries had pledged contributions to these mechanisms from sources additional to their development assistance. However, it was still not clear what proportion of the total contributions would be genuinely additional. The possible establishment of other funding mechanisms under the proposed climate and biodiversity conventions would therefore not only need to reiterate the need for genuine additionality but should put in place mechanisms for its verification.

48. Action at the regional level was also regarded as having an important role to play in the mobilization of financial resources for environmental protection. Regional funding mechanisms could play a vital complementary role to the global and national efforts. ECLAC's regional environmental fund was highlighted.

(ii) A global mechanism

49. However, some participants felt that ensuring long-term stability in resource transfers to developing countries for the alleviation of poverty and the protection of the environment would require the development of dual-purpose trade-related financial mechanisms, founded on the principles of equity, automaticity and additionality. The progressive internalization of environmental costs into product prices would require the creative use of regulatory controls, fiscal instruments, including taxes and charges on the consumption of fossil fuel.

50. The development of a global scheme for tradable emission quotas was considered a promising idea though it was fraught with a number of serious difficulties. Such a system, if properly designed, could provide a mechanism for the control of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions while meeting the fundamental developmental concerns of developing countries. Such a scheme would allocate among all countries stated shares of a permissible world-wide ceiling on carbon emissions. Emission limits could, for example, be based on the "Toronto targets" of 1988 (20 per cent CO<sub>2</sub> reduction globally by the year 2005) and allocation of quotas could be based on alternative formulas (per capita, land area, energy consumption per unit of GNP, or some weighted combination of the above, etc.). Allocations made on a per capita basis would result in a surplus of emission rights for developing countries enabling them to continue their process of economic growth while obtaining valuable financial and technological resources from the sale of surplus emission rights to deficit industrialized countries. Critics have pointed to the formidable difficulties involved in correctly determining the net balances between carbon emissions and absorptions (the sink) especially when a comprehensive approach is taken to all greenhouse gases - not just carbon dioxide. Establishing annual global emission targets and agreeing on a formula for the allocation of quotas were also cited as areas which would present major political if not technical difficulties. Furthermore, once quotas had been allocated among countries, market forces could discourage market-entry possibilities for new (and possibly more energy efficient) firms.

51. On the positive side it was argued that experiments with tradable CO<sub>2</sub> permits had worked well in the United States; and was a flexible and cost-effective way of ensuring the implementation of environmental regulations. Most technical problems were amenable to adequate solutions (e.g. market-entry difficulties could be handled by keeping some emission rights in reserve for new entrants) while political issues would have to be dealt with within the framework of multilateral negotiations. It was

suggested that the UNCTAD secretariat should pursue work in this area in order to determine better its feasibility for multilateral negotiations.

(iii) Other mechanisms

52. In the meantime, it would be useful to explore other possibilities, including the establishment of a system of credits for countries implementing environmental programmes which benefit third countries. Credits could then be used to purchase environmentally benign technologies and related imports.

53. It was also noted that the prolonged exploitation of the environment had brought a number of collective goods into scarce supply (e.g.) air quality, the ozone layer. The promotion of sustainable management practices now required the internalization of environmental costs into product prices, especially for non-renewable natural resources, and the application of values (prices) to things not hitherto considered as resources. These could be achieved through the use of regulatory controls, incentives and disincentives including fiscal measures.

54. Debt-for-nature conversion schemes were also considered as potentially useful dual-purpose instruments as they could reduce the pressures on developing countries to earn foreign exchange through the intensive exploitation and export of their natural resources, and could improve environmental management.

55. Concerning the role of the private sector in global environmental protection it was noted that this sector, and TNCs in particular, were well placed to provide finance, technology and managerial expertise. However, the underlying business motivations of the market economy did not always result in an equitable distribution of investible resources. Foreign direct investment tended to flow towards areas of high profitability, political and social stability, and good infrastructural advancement. Efforts would have to be made to provide additional support for investments in weaker developing countries.

3. Conditionality

56. Concerns were also raised about the possible use of environmental criteria to introduce new elements of conditionality into the evaluation procedures for development assistance to developing countries. The establishment of global financing mechanisms and their links with existing multilateral financial institutions carry evident risks of new conditionalities and even cross-conditionality. Environmental concerns should not place new obstacles to efforts by developing countries to obtain resources for their development programmes.

Conclusion

57. At the end of the meeting, the different possible areas of work for UNCTAD were highlighted, on the basis of the suggestions made in the course of the discussions:

(a) General issues

- To overcome the dilemma between environment and growth in rethinking a development approach which would turn environmental constraints into opportunities;

- To analyse the question of environmental norms and standards: the relevance of differentiating them according to prevailing local and national conditions;
- To study the trade related environmental policy measures taken nationally or internationally and to assess their impact on the trade of developing countries and the evolution of comparative advantages.

(b) Themes for action

- To secure effective and genuine additional financing (to examine automatic tax systems, trading of emission permits, etc.);
  - To identify the needs for technical and financial assistance which would enable the developing countries to gradually meet the standards agreed internationally and to be informed on trade regulations and measures taken for environmental purposes (transparency of procedure of enforcement and adequate notification systems);
  - To contribute to the review of GATT rules in the perspective of environment and development;
  - To establish criteria to determine if environment measures affecting trade are legitimate or of a protectionist nature and to maintain a data base of these measures;
  - To establish a dialogue with enterprises (TNCs) on norms and on transfer of environmentally sound technologies;
  - To enlarge the scope of commodity agreements in the perspective of management of natural resources.
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