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**Statement by Mr. Arindam Bagchi, First Secretary, on Fourth meeting of the informal consultation process of the plenary on the issue of the institutional framework for the environmental activities of the United Nations in follow-up to paragraph 169 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome [International Environmental Governance] on 10 September 2007**

Mr. Co-Chairs,

We thank you for organising this informal meeting for exchange of views on your Options Paper on the Informal Consultative Process on the Institutional Framework for the United Nations' Environmental Activities. We also thank you for your effort in holding wide-ranging consultations before preparing this detailed Options Paper.

India supports efforts for the better management of environment institutions of the United Nations as well as enhanced cooperation among these institutions. We believe that it is important to cover these issues from a broad perspective, focussing on implementation at country level, with a global environment governance structure supportive of the same.

However, we continue to believe that the core issue in ensuring the greater effectiveness of the international Environment structure relates to the gap in financing. The overall funding of UNEP, whose strengthening has been the underlying basis of strengthening IEG, is inadequate. We believe that the issue of financing is a fundamental problem in the fulfilment of mandates by UN entities in the area of environment.

Regrettably, this important issue of financing has not been dealt with adequately insofar as the various options proposed in the Paper. There is no focus on additional funding, except to have a new funding structure within UNEP to receive private donations. The basic problem of a lack of regular and assured funding has not been addressed. Instead, additional financing is expected through restructuring of existing organisations and 'more efficient use' of existing resources, which will not resolve the need for new and additional financial

resources. Attempts at restructuring will have no effect unless and until this basic issue is effectively addressed by the international community.

We believe that it is not yet opportune to consider the comprehensive restructuring of the institutional framework, as proposed by options under Chapter 4 of the Paper – “The broader transformation of the IEG system”. Moreover, the timelines proposed for implementation of these options are unrealistic. As you have acknowledged, there is no political consensus on the future design of a comprehensive IEG. There is also no consensus that this broader transformation of IEG is required urgently – the options paper acknowledges that some delegations see merit in the specialization/specific mandates of individual organisations. We would support this view. Moreover, the options paper does not adequately examine the need for enhancement of the legal status of UNEP and the complexities of assimilating the different Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), with different state parties. Accordingly, we believe that discussions on options proposed for broader transformation of the IEG system need not be taken up at this juncture.

With regard to the proposals for strengthening the current IEG, we would like to stress that all efforts should be focussed on improving the efficiency of the current IEG institutions so that they can more effectively assist national governments, instead of focussing on integrating existing institutions. Some of the options proposed have strayed from this objective. However, many of the other options may provide useful starting blocks towards strengthening the IEG. Some brief initial comments of my delegation are as follows:

- The options under Building Block 2, relating to strengthening UNEP and enhancing the role of EMG could be considered. However, we need to ensure that the objective remains the improvement of coordination and does not lead to a supervisory role.
- Options under Building Block 3 have significant legal implications, given the varying membership of MEAs and their separate mandates. We do not see the need to involve UNEP in areas which it currently does not handle and which are adequately handled by existing legal instruments. Further, each MEA has its own legal status and we do not see the need for them to report to the GA through UNEP, as proposed in Building Block 2.
- While promoting public private partnerships, as proposed under Building Block 5, may be useful in some cases, such efforts should not be viewed as a substitute for international development cooperation. Further, while some functional bodies of the UN have incorporated provisions for facilitating partnerships with scientific communities, civil society and business entities, this multi-stakeholder approach has been on a case-by-case basis. Incorporation of

these mechanisms, as proposed under Building Block 6 needs to be examined in detail, so that the intergovernmental nature of the UN system is maintained.

- I have already dwelt on the issue of financing, which is building block 7.

Mr. Co-Chairs,

It is important to ensure that strengthening the role of UNEP in the IEG framework is not at the cost of appropriate roles of other entities, particularly the MEAs. We also believe that it is important for us to focus on the process ahead and we look forward to hearing your views in this regard. We regard the options proposed under various building blocks as preliminary thoughts that need to be examined further and transformed into actionable proposals. In this regard, we would like to reiterate that there should be no artificial deadlines for completion of this process.

I thank you.

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