

Report of the appointment with
Henri-Luc Thibault, Chef of the International Affairs Section, Direction General Administration,
Finances and International Affairs in the French Ministry of Ecology.

Paris, September 30th, 2004.

Narito Harada and Laure Guillot represented Agir pour l'Environnement. We wanted to know more about the UNEO working group.

M. Thibault gave us quite a lot of information:

A panel of experts has been mandated by the Secretary General of the UN, Kofi Annan, to give recommendations on the reform of the UN. Their first recommendations should be released during the first semester of 2005.

The Ministry of Ecology wish this panel of experts, several States and the Secretary General of the UN himself to give a message in favour of the UNEO during the Summit for the Millenium Goals Assessment. This Summit will take place parallel to the General Assembly of the UN in 2005.

To achieve this objective, two working groups, one in New York –more "Foreign Affairs", another in Nairobi –more « Environment », have been set up. Since June 2004 and till January 2005, monthly sessions have tackled and will tackle the following issues :

- Strenghtening the scientific basis of environmental decisions (why not create a panel of experts such as the GIEC for instance ?) ;
- The warning role of the UNEO ;
- The role of observance and control of the UNEO ;
- Optimizing the relations between MEAs and the UNEO (should MAEs be independant from UNEO ?) ;
- Civil society participation ;
- Levels of governance (international, regional, local ?) ;
- Specific needs of Developing Countries.

France should present a 3-to-4 pages open position paper on the UNEO, in February 2005. To support this position paper, papers from experts (those contacted by IDDRI) will be distributed meanwhile. The first experts' papers will be publicised in October.

Next political appointments in 2004 : COP 10 in Buenos Aires, Summit in Ouagadougou, meeting of the Small Insular Developing Countries.

First meeting with the French environmental NGOs : November 5, 2004, during half a day. Objective: to discuss on our respective positions on different issues in debate within the UNEO working group. This debate should feed the French position paper.

The industry sector will be consulted as well.