

Network ~ 2002

Preparing for Earth Summit 2002

2002 on the road again

The first preparatory meeting for Earth Summit 2002 starts on May 30th, and will focus on organisational matters. Meanwhile the real discussion in the corridors and the Vienna Cafe, favourite haunt of delegates and stakeholders alike, will be on the issues for the Summit. UNED Forum's Felix Dodds reports.

Already thoughts are starting to coalesce around some interesting thematic areas for 2002 to address, including:

International Institutional Governance.

A non- issue for Rio+5, it has become increasingly clear that, as they are presently configured, the multi-lateral institutions are unable to address sustainable development.

In February the UNEP Governing Council agreed to set up a Ministerial working group to look at environmental governance issues. The group met 2 weeks ago in the margins of the CSD. Stakeholders have been requested to input to the debate on May 22-2th at UNEP HQ, in Nairobi. This UNEP initiative is to be welcomed as a clear attempt to open themselves up for review.

This discussion may address the issue of the need for a World Environment Organisation and there are already a number of studies produced that looked at this from the German Advisory Council on Global Change to Chatham House and Lead to mention a few.

One issue that the UNEP initiative will not look at is the future of the CSD. The position of the CSD in the UN structure, the effectiveness of the Commission and, if it is to have a future, what its work work programme might look like are just some of the questions being asked in the corridors. The third and perhaps most difficult to look at is does 2002 offer a chance to review the economic governance architecture and relationship to sustainable development? The GEF has started a process to look at its future in this area but what about the World Bank, IMF and WTO.

Conventions

There are six Rio Conventions that should be

reviewed in relation to 2002. These are:

- The Bio-safety Protocol, under the CBD (2 ratifications out of 50 required for entry into force);
- The Kyoto Protocol under the UNFCCC (23 ratifications out of 55 required);
- The Convention to Combat Desertification (requires funding);
- The Convention on Straddling and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (27 ratifications out of 30 required, EU countries still to ratify);
- Prior Informed Consent (13 Ratifications out of 50 required)
- Persistent Organic Pollutants (to be adopted, 50 countries needed to ratify).

One key challenge for governments is to be able to come to the Summit saying that they have ratified the Rio Conventions and adequately funded them.



Have Summit, will travel...

International Development Targets (IDT's)

The Summit should help to set in motion the work programmes to enable the IDTs to be realised. In many

cases this should include setting incremental targets for 2005 and 2010. The IDTs which should be reviewed include:

Education: To narrow the gender gap in primary and secondary education by 2005, and ensure that, by 2015 all children complete a full course of primary education.

Environment: To reverse the loss of

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environmental resources by 2015.

Health: To reduce infant mortality by 66%, and maternal mortality by 75% by 2015, access for all to primary reproductive health service by 2015.

HIV/AIDS: To halt, and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015. To reduce by 25% the rate of HIV infection in people aged 15-24, in most affected countries before the year 2005, and globally before 2010. At least 90% of young men and women must have access to HIV-Preventative information by 2005, and 95% by 2010.

Poverty: To halve by 2015, the proportion of people globally (currently 22%) whose income is less than \$1/day.

Sustainable Development: National Strategies for Sustainable Development to be completed by 2002 and implemented by 2005.

Water: To halve, by 2015, the proportion of people who do not have access to safe drinking water (currently 20%).

Sectoral/Cross Sectoral Issues

Whatever the issues are for 2002, the approach should be a sectoral one looking at the cross sectoral issues through a sectoral lens. Taking water, what has been the impact of globalisation? What finance is required? What would appropriate gender mainstreaming look like? What technology transfer, capacity building and governance structures need to be in place? This approach should enable us to identify who is going to do what, by when and how.

Stakeholders

The approach for Earth Summit 2002 is to engage the stakeholders throughout the preparatory process. Some thoughts on this have been drawn up through the UNED Forum review of MSP's (see last month's **Network 2002**). For example:

- Clarify the role of dialogues and global technical round tables and how they feed into the intergovernmental deliberations and negotiations;
- Ensure publication of information on the process, issues and outcomes to all stakeholders and the general public;
- Dialogues should be documented in the Chairs summary and put forward to subsequent negotiations - participating stakeholders should be consulted when finalising the summaries;
- Multi-stakeholder dialogues at the 2nd Prep. Comm. in January 2002 should focus on discussions on common priority issues - they should include all Major Groups;
- At the 3rd Prep. Comm. Multi-stakeholder dialogues should focus on priority issues as identified in the official process;
- At the 4th Prep. Comm there should be dialogue between Stakeholders and Ministers on Priority issues;
- Stakeholders should be ready to contribute their own commitments at the Summit itself.

And then...

Earth Summit 2002 should be seen as a landmark event, but we should also be thinking about where we hope to be in 2003, 4, 5, 6 (to infinity) and beyond. 2002 needs to be seen as the starting block to set this all in motion.

Editorial

Finally we are underway. CSD 10 is upon us, and with it the start of the journey to Johannesburg. Although I'm not sure if it's a relief to be getting going, or if the weight of the world has just been placed on our shoulders. Time will tell. Meantime we exercise a little artistic licence in pre-empting the debate by proposing one of the roads down which we may choose to travel.

First the small matter of CSD 9. Debate on Transport, International cooperation for an enabling environment, information for decision making and, in particular, energy has been, well, lengthy if quite calm. A general lack of imagination from any quarters matched with an apathetic approach towards seeking common ground seem to have been all too familiar. Nevertheless, one can't help thinking this is somewhat the calm before the storm that is Prep. Comm I, immediately following CSD 9 - making this year's session a straight 3-weeks. If progress has been low key, it would seem that even government delegates need a little sleep...apparently.

Much has been happening in the margins of CSD 9 here at UN Head Quarters. So much so that one could be forgiven for thinking that the margins are wider than the actual page. Although the Vienna Café always was the place to be... I digress.

Most notable was UNEP's much applauded high-level workshop on International Environmental Governance. It's really rather refreshing to consider the framework within which we hold the debate for a change. Especially when it's the frame which is holding itself open to inspection. Well done UNEP.

Following on this theme, we report on VERTIC's work on Verification of MEA's. Here we look at the benefits to be gleaned from legally binding instruments by actually analysing the outcomes of their implementation. Decision Making never had it so good. The premise being that such analysis would provide benchmarks for future and more effective implementation. Imagine that.

Packing out another of the Conference rooms here on the East River was World Information Transfer's 10th Annual Conference on Environment and Health. Looking this year at this topic in relation to globalisation, the event certainly had its work cut out - the diversity of perspectives being huge. Nevertheless, not too confusing for delegates to see that current globalisation trends are leading to greater in-equality between developed and developing nations. And it doesn't take a seasoned UN delegate to surmise who is on the losing side.

In advance of the Istanbul+5 review, due in June, Television Trust for the Environment, in partnership with BBC World and UNED Forum, have launched a series of programme titled 'City Life'. We report.

Looking forwards, next month we have the 3rd Least Developed Countries Conference. As the Earth Summit sharpens its attention on the need to engage Development, specifically poverty, as under-lying themes, processes such as this are key indicators for current political will.

And Finally, our NGO colleagues in S. Africa are full steam ahead in preparing for the Summit in the host nation. You can read on the next page about their planned activities for the next 16 months. Oh, does that mean the Summit will be in September? I never said a word...

T.Middleton

News, News, News...

South Africa's NGOs mobilise efforts for 2002

Sawubona!

South African NGOs have over the last few months been hard at work preparing for the World Summit on Sustainable Development to be held in Johannesburg in 2002. The South African initiative started in March 2000 and really gained momentum by the end of 2000 when the NGO process was formally launched during NGO Week organized by the South African National NGO Coalition (SANGOCO) in September 2000.

A guide for South African NGOs for Earth Summit 2002 was published and launched at the NGO Week in Durban. A key challenge for the South African NGO Forum has been to conceptualize the Summit as an African, Southern and then global process, addressing key issues of poverty alleviation and environmental degradation which have not been adequately addressed since the Rio summit in '92.

The South African process has included both national and regional consultations in developing a plan to institutionalize the process within South Africa, and is now reaching out to global NGOs for ideas and assistance in planning the "global gathering of NGOs in 2002" in Johannesburg. Representatives of the South African NGO Forum for the World Summit on Sustainable Development are attending CSD-10 to meet with others and discuss innovative ways of bringing together the NGO Global Forum in 2002. We have produced and distributed a briefing paper which outlines some of our thoughts and poses a few critical questions to guide further debate and discussion. In addition, a newsletter will be published (daily during the PrepComms otherwise monthly) to give people space to articulate their views and reflections on the PrepComms and the lead up to 2002. *Summit Update* will be published in both hard copy format and electronically. To subscribe to the newsletter please use the following e-mail server: sangowssdnews-subscribe@topica.com.

To contact the South African CSD participants please contact us 212-8773395 until the 3^d of May 2001, thereafter Bryan Ashe at +27-11-4036056

e-mail: admin@earthsummit2002.org.za



Canada's Environment Minister David Anderson welcomed fellow Ministers and representatives as current President of UNEP's Governing Council. Drawing from a number of documents preceding the meeting Ministers began in their prescribed task to carry out "A comprehensive policy orientated assessment of existing institutional weaknesses, as well as the future needs and options for strengthened international environmental governance, including the financing of UNEP".

Getting down to the heart of the matter, Anderson noted the root cause of the problem: "...in the face of growing environmental challenges and new expectations from the international community, the ability of institutions to meet expectations and respond effectively is limited. The ability of countries, particularly developing countries, to keep pace and effectively participate is being stretched beyond capacity."

However, not wanting to be too downbeat from the outset, he continued: "This issue is on our agenda not because we...have failed to make the existing institutions work. The growth and diversity of the current environmental agenda and related institutions, including the increasing demands on UNEP, are a byproduct of our success."

The meeting quickly moved on to consider UNEP's Executive Director's report. Drawing together existing work within a new context, the report looks at the full depth of global and regional intergovernmental environmental institutions.

Some of the key outcomes of this initial discussion are as follows:

- There is a need for a better definition of environmental governance;
- The process of International Environmental Governance should be seen within the broad context of Sustainable Development;
- The series of meetings on this issue should lead to comprehensive inputs to Earth Summit 2002;
- Certain points (of the ED's report) go beyond the mandate of Environment Ministers, and require the involvement of other branches of government;
- Consensus on the need to strengthen UNEP and offer it more enhanced and reliable funding;
- Dispersed headquarter secretariats and meeting venues demand increasing costs and efforts from all countries;
- General support for the effective participation of Stakeholders in the process.

Of particular interest there is the reference to considering this debate within the context of Sustainable Development, thus broadening discussion beyond the role solely of UNEP. Also, notably is the call for other government ministries to be drawn into the process.

From here the process moves back to UNEP HQ in Nairobi, where civil society will input (May 22-25). Shortly after an independent experts meeting will be hosted in Cambridge followed by a meeting of the Environmental Management Group in June. Governments are undecided as to when they will next meet, although the margins of future international environment events seem a safe bet. Contact: www.unep.org/IEG

UNEP Host first Ministerial Meeting on International Environmental Governance

Following on from the decision from its Governing Council, UNEP hosted its first open-ended Ministerial meeting on International Environmental Governance in the margins of CSD 9 last week. In what effectively constituted a self-review of structural effectiveness to address global environmental challenges UNEP's Executive Director, Dr Klaus Töpfer, invited ministers to consider its future.

This, the first of a series of meetings, represents much welcomed addition to the Earth Summit 2002 process, as evidenced by the number of Ministers in attendance. A general appreciation of the conflicting, resource heavy and diverse number of institutions dealing with the Sustainable Development agenda has led to increasing calls for a review of current structures.

Sustainable Transport & CSD9

Part of the discussion at CSD 9 focused on Transport. Did the dialogue become congested, or was it all plain sailing. NGO Transport Caucus Northern Co-Chair, Noah Budnick, reports.

The NGO Transport Caucus took advantage of its major role in the Multistakeholder process. It hosted three side events: 'What can NGOs and the UN do to promote sustainable transportation globally,' where the initial thoughts on a global network of sustainable transport NGOs were voiced; 'Working towards sustainable public transit and urban land use policies,' at which Sr. Enrique Penalosa, the ex-mayor of Bogotá, Colombia, spoke; and a delegate bicycle ride where environmental ministers and sustainable transportation advocates from over a dozen countries cruised the UN grounds.

The Caucus was pleased with its level of participation during the Multistakeholder dialogue sessions which focused on the two topics, 'Public-Private Partnerships to Achieve Sustainable Energy for Transport,' and 'Sustainable Transport Planning: choices and models for human settlements and vehicle alternatives.'

During the first dialogue session the Transport Caucus pointed out that the addictive qualities of the world's transportation system are wreaking devastating impacts on the environment, and our communities and physical well-being. Sustainable energy for transport can be achieved by a simultaneous approach on two fronts:

- 1) implementing strategies that make transport more energy efficient, especially by decreasing reliance on fossil fuels and shifting to more sustainable modes, and;
- 2) adopting policies that reduce the demand for transport. Non-motorized transportation must be promoted by strengthening the non-motorized vehicle industry and providing safe and accessible infrastructure for women, the poor, elderly, and other vulnerable groups.

NGOs recognize their vital role in raising awareness and educating communities, ensuring a link to governments that will foster inclusive planning and citizen participation in decision-making. The withdrawal of states from (and resultant privatization of) highway and housing projects has produced unsustainable patterns of travel and urban sprawl. During the dialogue session NGOs made a number of proposals:

- Support research to improve understanding and assessment of transport policies and their social consequences.
- Develop more effective strategies to reduce private motor vehicle use; remove subsidies to unsustainable modes of transport.



Grid locked Dialogue?

- Establish and enforce global minimum standards to eliminate leaded fuels, reduce noise, and increase vehicle and road safety, particularly for vulnerable road users.
- Get prices right, count externalities, and assist poor directly rather than by distorting the marketplace.
- Enable participation in sustainable transport decision-making to ensure that international and governmental institutions do not fund infrastructures without prior environmental and social assessments.

The second Multistakeholder dialogue session, 'Sustainable Transport Planning: choices and models for human settlements and vehicle alternatives,' focused on transport's role as a means to provide people with access to goods and services.

Rural modes of travel and load bearing, such as walking and headloading, are rarely considered during infrastructure development. Road construction does not automatically lead to economic growth nor does it benefit all sectors of society. More appropriate planning must start with household and community wide data collection, and it must blossom into local participation in the planning and decision-making processes of sustainable transportation development.

Women are key societal groups, yet they are often the poorest and most dependent on walking and public transport. Current transportation systems have not met the goals of sustainability, as increasing pollution and the hazardous safety conditions on roadways violate health standards. Poor transportation planning increasingly affects children. The bias towards private motor vehicles has made streets unsafe, so children have become more dependent on adults for basic mobility, creating more motor vehicle trips, and thus making streets less safe.

Locally developed technologies are frequently overlooked, but they are often more efficient, affordable, and accessible than modern development schemes. During the second dialogue session the NGO Transport Caucus made the following proposals:

- The UN must develop norms and regulations for sustainable transport, provide technical assistance, and assist in setting international standards. UNDP should play a role in city planning. There is a danger in exporting outdated planning methods to developing countries.
- Pay special attention to women's transport needs and ensure their participation in decision-making.
- Consider the unsustainable nature of private motorized vehicles and require the public sector to ensure the provision of equitable public and non-motorized transport when applying structural adjustment programs.
- Internalize true costs of vehicle use to create economic parity for other transport modes.
- Ensure adequate public control over local transport sectors to maintain safe and equitable service.
- Develop people-centered (not vehicle-centered) transport planning guidelines and design manuals.

While CSD9 provided a stage on which to lobby for more socially equitable and environmentally sustainable transportation

policies the Commission's output was predictably soft.

CSD9 was a fantastic opportunity for the NGO delegation to network and share their knowledge of sustainable transportation with each other and with governmental officials. It was remarkable, though not surprising, to hear similar experiences and problems voiced from all parts of the world. The foundations of the international sustainable transport coalition will serve as a basis for information sharing and continued global support for local initiatives that promote safer, cleaner, and more accessible and affordable transportation for all parts of society.

Battling for meaningful Energy negotiations at CSD 9

On the other side of the CSD 9 Corridor were the Energy dialogues. UNED Forum's Rosalie Gardiner tracks progress in the meeting rooms and the Vienna Café.

With the Energy negotiations thoroughly underway, this year's CSD is proving to be a tough slog. Sheila Oparaocha from ENERGIA (an international network on gender and sustainable energy) talked of her frustration about the lack of depth and clear focus that have so far come out of the drafting sessions.

She strongly advocated the key elements proposed during the Major Group dialogues in the previous week. In particular, Oparaocha referred to the crucial need for decentralized regulation of energy supply, especially for rural areas which typically have least access to energy and contain the poorest communities but she said "it also requires vital steps to ensure that local participation takes place in decentralized decision-making processes". Quoting the World Health Organisation, she stated that the 5th largest cause of major health problems is a result of exposure to carbon monoxide - a typical phenomenon in households that use fuel wood for energy which, she said, is a clear argument for making substantial increases in Research and Development for renewable and clean forms of energy.

She emphasized that "affordability is another essential factor to ensure access and sustainable use of energy", highlighting the example of a solar energy project in South Africa, where women had been involved at the outset in the development and design of relatively cheap and multiple-use solar powered cookers. On cutting out fossil fuel subsidies, she said that whilst the G77 and China had seemed to indicate their support, other groups, such as the EU, were less decisive in their response. However, as Oparaocha succinctly put it, it remains to be seen whether the final text will bring any real changes in progress on access and use of sustainable forms of energy.

Fatima Dia Toure, Ministry for Environment (Senegal), also

spoke to **Network 2002** on her perspectives of the negotiations so far.

Focusing on the links between poverty, domestic economic growth and access to energy, where currently some 50% of people in developing countries lack basic energy supply, she argued that basic energy provision is crucial for household, industrial and agricultural needs. She agreed with Sheila Oparaocha on the importance of the local level in regulation and provision of energy but also pointed out this was impeded by the considerable lack of resources, both technical and financial, available to local authorities and communities. Without enhanced access to the technical expertise and financial means for large-scale development in the energy sector, she said, countries like Senegal would not be able to make real progress in sustainable development more generally.

Access, she felt, was intimately linked to affordability and, in turn, to price differentials in international markets, therefore the Kyoto Protocol mechanisms, such as the Clean Development Mechanism, would be crucial drivers for scaling-up the use of renewables in developing countries, along-side better access to energy supply. "The ultimate goal of the energy debate is to improve global sustainable development" she stated, "developing countries don't need to make the same mistakes as we've seen in developed countries, but developed countries will have to give us their support in this process".

She disagreed with President Bush's view that Kyoto undermines national economic priorities, arguing that this short-term view fails to take into account the considerable consequent costs of severe drought and flooding associated to our release of Green House Gases that continue to exacerbate these negative effects of climate change.

She also pointed to the need for real progress on integrating international, regional, national and even local level programmes, as well as in seeking new and enhanced finance for the energy sector beyond (declining) ODA provision, and in furthering major group participation in the dialogue around sustainable energy, both from the private sector and wider civil societies. The G77 governments, she said, didn't want to hear more blanket statements on the need for greater energy efficiency, rather they demanded clear and concrete proposals for action, breaking down the steps toward sustainable energy provision and enhancement for the next 5, 10 and 15 years. Toure indicated her clear view that Energy should be a key issue for the Earth Summit 2002.

Chaired by Alison Drayton (Guyana), the formal negotiations and informal consultations will continue until Friday 27th April. Some of the key sticking points remain, including debate over: the use of nuclear power; the role of ODA, international finance and trade; cooperation between international and UN institutions; market reform, including removal of subsidies and the promotion of opportunities for women through credit facilities; a target for 10% increase in wind power by 2020; the inclusion of energy policy within the World Bank's Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers; a target for the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol by 2002.

Contact: www.un.org/esa/sustdev/enr.htm

CSD 9 Energy Debate...



...Truly Electric

LIVING IN THE CITY

Just launched, 'CityLife', a new series from Television Trust for the Environment (TVE) investigating how cities can be made better places to live. UNED Forum's Jan McHarry reports.

With the forthcoming Istanbul+5 review process and in the run-up to Earth Summit 2002, TVE launches its second 'Life' series on BBC World. The backdrop for 'City Life' is globalisation and its impact upon the lives of ordinary people. With half of humanity already living in cities (a figure set to rise dramatically in the next few decades), the series focuses on the problems facing the world's mega cities and urban areas whilst highlighting how local action and vision often wins the day.

Amid the growing clamour about how best to tackle social development, environmental protection, social exclusion and inequality in a rapidly globalising world, the 'City Life' series explores a number of challenging questions. Are cities really engines of progress, or are they breeding grounds for crime, violence and disease? Cities have always lured people with dreams of riches and opportunity, but sadly for many the reality is poverty, poor housing and a myriad of unmet expectations.

Commentary and analysis on these dilemmas and possible solutions is provided by a variety of respected professionals and individuals. 'City Life' gives a prominent voice to ordinary people and their insights on living in cities, towns, villages and squatter settlements throughout the world.

'City Life' includes coverage on efforts to provide basic health care services for everyone; populations on the move; tackling violence through community solutions; rising urban poverty; urban regeneration and participatory planning; refugee rights; food and nutrition; the role of culture in our cities; housing and settlement, and HIV/AIDS drug patents, intellectual property rights and the stance of pharmaceutical companies. Launching the series in mid April, the first programme followed Marta Suplicy, the new mayor of San Paulo (now the world's 4th largest city), in visits to schools, a hospital, a favela and a shelter for battered women, as she attempts to turn the city around.

Working in close collaboration with the Panos Network, Inter-world Radio, UNED Forum, the One World Foundation and the Women's Feature Service in Delhi (a partnership made possible by a grant from the UK National Lotteries Board), the 'City Life' series is accompanied by a multi-media initiative via the Internet - a website www.lifeonline.org, featuring video and radio clips, complementary reports and briefing material, more information about the projects featured, official documents, programme transcripts and a wealth of other links and perspectives. New material is being added weekly to the site. Later in May, there will be the opportunity to participate in an online debate with key spokespeople in the series. There really is something for everyone on this site - bookmark it now!

More information: www.lifeonline.org

UNED Forum's contribution on: www.earthsummit2002.org

The Economics of Health and the Environment

World Information Transfers 10th annual conference on Health & the Environment, held in parallel to CSD 9, sought to address the complexities of the effects of globalisation on health. Network reports.

It was clear from the outset that the biggest challenge in broaching the linkages between globalisation, environment and health is the sheer diversity of issues. As co-sponsor of the meeting Greece's Ambassador Elias Gounaris started proceedings by asking: 'How is environmental health globalised?' The Ambassador proffered the international food markets and trans-boundary nature of disease as initial answers. Going further, Gounaris considered the role of multi-national companies in taking a more proactive stance, citing global pharmaceuticals liability for the drugs they put onto the global market.

Laurie Garrett, science journalist for Newsday, offered an interesting response to this position. Considering the increases in life expectancy in recent decades, Garrett implicated improvements in sanitation, access to freshwater and clean air as having a significantly higher effect on mortality rates than modern medicine. It was interesting then to consider that trends are now starting to reverse as those basic components of human health are becoming increasingly scarce or stressed. Moreover, Garrett highlighted modern-day phenomenon's such as resistance to bacteria, and the power imbalance that exists between men & women in terms of the global AIDS pandemic.

The meeting turned to consider the role of International Environmental Policy. UNEP's Adnan Amin drew the meeting's attention to the impact of multi-lateral environmental agreements. The recent signing of the Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants was seen to have a highly proactive impact in dealing with chemicals hazardous to human health.

Providing a more philosophical viewpoint Dr. David Korten, of Positive Futures Network, ventured the perspective that money was widely held as human's main priority. What, he questioned; if life became our main priority. This surely would offer a new nexus on global decision-making processes. Korten then cited the disputes at recent trade forums (read Seattle, Prague Washington and Quebec), as examples of civil society unease at the social impacts of globalisation.

Whilst the meeting, and this article, merely highlight the huge diversity and complex interlinkages between pure economics, trade, environment and health concerns, some clear messages did come out of the meeting. There was a generally held view that, in its current form, globalisation is creating inequality. However, looking to the future the speakers were united in identifying that the problems caused will have global impact. The common perception that environmental health concerns, of the type covered by the meeting are predominantly associated to developing nations will need to be revised. As these issues shift into industrialised nations in coming years there will surely then be a better understanding of the global approach necessary.

Based on the notes of Cindy Yang

The NGO Forum at the 3rd UN Conference for Least Developed Countries

The NGO Forum is being held in Brussels (10-20 May 2001) during the 3rd UN Conference on Least Developed Countries (14-20 May 2001). Daphne Davies, Co-ordinator of the NGO Forum, reports.

The Conference's aim is to eradicate the poverty of Least Developed Countries. Economic globalisation has adversely affected LDCs, and there are now 49 Least developed Countries - 34 in Africa, 9 in Asia, 5 in the Pacific and 1 in the Caribbean - with more than half of their populations living on less than US \$1 a day. Their economies are marginalised by global trade, as their share of world exports is 0.4%. And the situation is getting worse.

At least 1000 NGO and civil society organisations, including about 250 NGOs from Least Developed Countries, are expected to participate in the Forum and the Conference. NGOs participants include those concerned about environment, women, human rights, debt, health, development good governance and peace.

The main policy demands of the NGOs concerning the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) are:

- Integration of aid packages: elimination of Least Developed Countries debt; free access to Northern markets for all LDC goods and reformation of the iniquities in WTO trading rules; structural adjustment policies; coordination of all donors, including governments and financial institutions, to Least Developed Countries; measures against wars and conflicts and prohibition of arms sales;
- Development of LDC "good governance"; encouraging an LDC united position to solve their problems and strengthen their positions in global negotiations; health promotion of women's equality; environmentally sustainable growth.

NGOs at the Official Conference

Accredited NGOs will get daily access to all the UN Conference premises. So far there have been over 1500 registrations for the NGO Forum events, which we believe is a reflection of the wide interest from NGOs in this Conference. Of these one third are from NGOs in Least Developed Countries.

NGO Activities

NGO Plenary - May 10 – 12. This takes place in the Batiment Charlemagne where NGOs will be finalizing their NGO Policy Document to the official Conference, as well as discussing lobbying strategy on cross-cutting issues. It finishes on May 12 with the finalisation of the NGO Policy Document and Statement which will be presented to the Official Conference on

Monday, May 14.

NGO Forum May - 14 – 20. This takes place in Bibliotheque Solvay, very close to the UN Conference Building, and will be opened by United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan on May 14.

There will be daily workshops, designed to feed into the official Thematic Plenary Sessions, covering topics such as peace, good governance, health, social service provision, trade, infra-structural development and overseas development aid.

There will also be daily briefings on progress of the official Conference discussions, as well as special interest caucuses.

Exhibition Space

There will be exhibition space for 36 NGOs in the Institute of Natural Sciences. The Institute looks onto Parc Leopold, about 4 minutes from the UN Conference Building.

There will be a Developing World film festival of short films, (evening of May 15 & 16) in the Centre Sanghor (near Parc Leopold), as well as an NGO reception organised by Solidar on May 17 (open to all, small entrance fee) in the centre of Brussels.

Policy Work

This has been developed through the production of Policy documents, and an interactive policy discussion on the NGO Forum website. During the 2nd and 3rd Preparatory Committees in New York in February and April 2001 four policy statements outlining key civil society concerns and desired policy outcomes for the Conference were presented. The NGO policy document *What is at Stake for Civil Society* will be finalised during the NGO Forum Plenary session (May 10 – 12). The main issues which NGOs have identified as good governance, debt cancellation, increased ODA flows, greater involvement of civil society in development decisions, and clear measures for implementation.

Website and publicity - The NGO Forum website www.oneworld.org/liaison/forum gives details of the programme, side meetings, exhibitions, etc. It will be updated daily during the NGO Forum.

There will be a daily NGO Bulletin – Outreach - produced by the UNED Forum Norway. The bulk of the material will be written by NGOs and then edited for inclusion in Outreach. It will also include the updated programme of events.

Implementation and Monitoring of Results

If the Conference is to succeed, a clear implementation and monitoring structure must be set up to follow up on the results of the Programme of Action. NGOs will seek to be part of an official monitoring team set up to monitor the results of the Conference, as it is clear from discussions with some of the G77 countries that they want to see positive results.

NGOs are also beginning discussion about setting up a civil society team to carry out monitoring, possibly using a similar structure to that of Social Watch. This structure would have to be set up immediately following the Conference between May and September, initially based on NGO networks in both OECD countries and Least Developed Countries.

Importantly the NGO Forum would also be looking at the way in which the results of the Conference and NGO documents would feed into future UN Conferences such as Earth Summit 2002 in South Africa.

Putting Verification on the Agenda

As the debate on reforming International Environmental Governance heats up VERTIC's Clare Tenner puts forward the case for verification as a means of improving the effectiveness of the agreements we already have.

Ahead of the Earth Summit 2002 it is already clear that the world has failed to meet the goals set in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Despite the objectives and proposed actions laid out in Agenda 21, pressures on the environment and the natural resource base are increasing across the globe. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has failed to prevent rising global emissions of greenhouse gases. Notwithstanding the Convention on Biological Diversity, 25% of mammal species and 11% of bird species are at significant risk of extinction; and the Forest Principles have failed to prevent the continued loss of biodiversity rich primary forests.

Of course there are many reasons for these failures, not least a shortage of political and financial commitment to the process of sustainable development. Reversing the trends will require a multitude of changes at regional, national and local levels. However, setting up strong international frameworks is another important element. There has been a great deal of talk about global environmental governance, in particular the need for co-ordination of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and the potential role for a global environment organisation. However, there has been less consideration of the means to improve the effectiveness of individual MEAs.

One way to improve implementation of international agreements is to strengthen their verification systems. Verification is the process of gathering, interpreting and using information to make a judgement about parties' compliance or non-compliance with an agreement. The aim of verification is to establish or increase confidence that all parties are implementing a treaty fairly and effectively. Verification achieves this objective by detecting non-compliance, deterring parties that might be tempted not to comply, and providing compliant parties with the opportunity to demonstrate their compliance.

Verification has been a fundamental issue in the negotiation and implementation of most arms control agreements, but has received less support from the international environment community. For example, the Commission for Sustainable Development does have a mandate to 'examine the progress of the implementation of Agenda 21 at the national, regional and international levels', but national reporting is voluntary and limited resources are available for reviewing the vast amounts of information collected. Under the UNFCCC developed countries are required to report annual inventories of greenhouse gas emissions, and these are reviewed by experts, but there is no process for using this information to assess parties' progress. Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity are required to report this year on their implementation of the Convention for only the second time since it entered into force, and there is no process at all for gathering information on implementation of the Forest Principles. The exception is the Kyoto Protocol,

which does make provision for strong rules for monitoring and reporting and review of implementation, backed up by a Compliance Committee. However, this pales into insignificance in comparison to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, which has a staff of around 500 to collect and analyse data on the implementation, by governments and industry, of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Could Earth Summit 2002 provide an opportunity to reinforce these arrangements, and would this make the agreements more effective?

Well, Earth Summit 2002 is certainly the place to strengthen verification of Agenda 21. In fact the European Commission has recognised this. In its Communication to the Council and the European Parliament, the Commission recommends that the Summit should 'set the agenda and modalities for the follow up and monitoring of continued implementation of Agenda 21, through a mechanism for future review'. Given the breadth of Agenda 21 it will be difficult to design an effective review mechanism, but there is certainly scope for improvement and the issue merits discussion in 2002.

Could Earth Summit 2002 go further and attempt to improve verification of other MEAs, particularly those associated with UNCED? It is too late to re-write the agreements that have already been agreed, but the Summit could recommend action to strengthen the reporting and review systems in these agreements. For example, agreement could be reached to complete negotiations on the multilateral consultative process required under Article 16 of the Convention on Climate Change. The Process would help parties to report on their implementation of the Convention. The recommendation could extend to negotiating strong monitoring, reporting and review systems in future agreements, for example on forests. The emphasis here should be on negotiating objectives for MEAs with which it is possible to monitor an assess compliance – a failing of many established MEAs.

NGOs have an important role to play in promoting these ideas. Firstly, those working on the individual agreements, and on the CSD process, can push for stronger verification systems in the run-up to Earth Summit 2002. Secondly NGOs can lead by example. For example, in the absence of any formal systems to monitor implementation of the 1997 Intergovernmental Panel on Forests 'Proposals for Action', NGOs and Indigenous Peoples Organisations initiated their own process which monitored and reviewed their implementation in 20 countries and reported the findings to the CSD 8.

The agenda for Earth Summit 2002 is already crowded, but inclusion of this issue could meet many of the demands of the Summit. Verification could help improve the effectiveness of international agreements. It would allow progressive states to take credit for their actions and to share information on effective implementation strategies with those states finding it harder to meet the demands of the various agreements. Industry stakeholders would receive a clear signal on the requirement for action, and environmental groups would be assured of the integrity of global environmental agreements. The question should not be why discuss verification, but why not?

By Clare Tenner, Environment Researcher, The Verification Research, Training and Information Centre



Meet the International Advisory Board

Organisation Name:

Consumer Unity and Trans-society (CUTS)

Web-site:

www.cuts.org

Summary of Organisation:

CUTS is an international Non-governmental, non-profit organisation, and having offices in India and Africa. CUTS has been working at all levels on four operational areas:

- Consumer protection, which includes accountability, regulatory reforms, etc;
- Trade & Development, which include investment and competition policies;
- Sustainable production and consumption including consumer safety;
- Rural consumers and women's empowerment.

Key programmes:

- Consumer information and public education;
- Targeted lobbying and training initiatives to promote Eco-mark (Indian Eco-label) and facilitate environment friendly technology and eco-labelling;
- Concept testing of green consumption;
- Research and advocacy on advertising, environmental claims and effects on sustainable consumption;
- International and national advocacy and public education on sustainable production and consumption issues.

Key partners:

UNCTAD, UNEP, Indian Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Indian Department of Consumer Affairs, ICTSD, Consumers International.

Regions Covered:

India & Africa



The Rio Conventions: Committing to Sustainability

UNED Forum presents the next in its series of briefing papers in preparation for Earth Summit 2002. The paper sets out clear targets for the Summit to aim for.

This new briefing paper provides an up-to-date review of the current state of play for the six Multi-lateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) that have arisen during and after the Earth Summit in 1992, this includes:

- Convention on Biological Diversity and Bio-safety Protocol
- Convention on Climate Change and Kyoto Protocol
- Convention on Desertification
- Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants
- Agreement on Straddling and Migratory Fish Stocks (from the UN Convention on Law of the Sea)

This key resource looks at the current status of the different MEAs. Each convention is described with a short profile of their aims, national obligations, procedures for implementation, possible future challenges, key dates for follow-up and resource links, as well as a detailed summary table of all countries that have signed and / or ratified the various agreements.

The paper comes from the perspective that, whilst we still don't know what the key issues for negotiation will be at the Earth Summit in 2002, these existing and new agreements offer us an opportunity look at how the international community can make some clear headway in existing blocks to implementation of the MEAs and enhancing action plans and strategies for these priority areas. The paper also includes some discussion on possible new agreements, such as the UN Economic Commission for Europe's Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters". It also addresses the need for further implementation of the International Development Targets, which are also key in the drive toward real national commitment in the process of sustainable development.

Available on-line by mid-May: www.earthsummit2002.org

UNED Forum's Towards Earth Summit 2002 Project International Advisory Board

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Diary Dates, Events & Conferences

14-20 May	3rd UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries. Brussels, Belgium. Contact: www.un.org/events/ldc3/conference/
16-18 May	OECD Environment Ministers Meeting & Annual OECD Council Meeting at Ministerial Level. Paris, France. Contact: www.oecd.org/media/upcoming.htm
23-27 May	Youth Conference on Environment & Sustainable Development. Swedish Ministry for Environment. Borgholm Sweden. Contact: camilla.funke@lsu.se
June	First UNEP/GEF Global International Water Assessment - General Assembly. Kalmar, Sweden. Contact: www.giwa.net
6-8 June	UN General Assembly Special Session on the Review & Appraisal of the Implementation of the Habitat Agenda. New York, USA. Contact: www.istanbul+5.htm
25-27 June	UN General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS. New York, USA. Contact: www.unaids.org/whatsnew/others/un_special/index.html
16-27 July	Resumed COP6/14th Session of the UNFCCC Subsidiary Bodies. Bonn, Germany. Contact: www.unfccc.int
28-31 August	African Regional Preparatory Committee for Earth Summit 2002. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Contact: www.un.org/rio+10/web_pages/regional_preparations_for_rio.htm
24-25 September	European Regional Preparatory Committee for Earth Summit 2002. Geneva, Switzerland. Contact: www.un.org/rio+10/web_pages/regional_preparations_for_rio.htm
23-24 October	Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Preparatory Committee for Earth Summit 2002. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Contact: www.un.org/rio+10/web_pages/regional_preparations_for_rio.htm
28-30 October	West Asian Regional Preparatory Committee for Earth Summit 2002. Cairo, Egypt. Contact: www.un.org/rio+10/web_pages/regional_preparations_for_rio.htm

What's in next months **Network ~2002...**

- **CSD 10 - Outcomes & Analysis**
- **LDC III - Outcomes & Analysis**
- **Financing for Development Update**
- **Istanbul + 5, Habitat II - Outcomes & Analysis**
- **Swedish Youth Conference - Outcomes & Analysis**



Your Input is our Output.

Network 2002 is produced by the United Nations Environment & Development Forum, a multistakeholder NGO working in preparation for Earth Summit 2002. We welcome your contribution to the process.
Contact the editor at: tmiddleton@earthsummit2002.org.

