

Network ~ 2002



Preparing for Earth Summit 2002



Reflections of the CSD 8 Chairman

Minister Mayr Malanado, Chair of CSD - 8, offers Network 2002 his thoughts on this years session, its successes and future challenges for Sustainability. We have only come so far.

Minister, You've just Chaired one of the most warmly received multi-stakeholder dialogue sessions conducted by the CSD. How do you feel this process should advanced beyond CSD 8 and in what forum should this process take place?

I think the agriculture issue is a very difficult one, because as we have seen in former meetings such as in Maastricht, the whole approach on agriculture has different views and interpretations. There is no agreement on the views that have been expressed here at the CSD. Right now all the discussion is blocked and polarised, and this is no good because what it means is that no further advancement or development on the issues can be done. So I hope that the different delegations can find a place to talk about their common issues in their different perspectives.

Do you think the CSD has a role to play in carrying that agenda forward?

I think so, and I think the Commission is a very interesting forum where people can approach different things that have not been possible to work forward in other forums. The future that we have to look for is to find these common forums for discussion. But right now this is only a discussion.

The agenda addressed Trade, Finance and Investment. A lot of the concerns and differences of opinion were reiterated from previous discussions on these issues. These are very tricky issues specifically in regards to North-South relations. If governments are going to make progress in terms of Sustainability, what challenges must they face?

At this moment we need to clarify the issue. We need to hear from others. We need to establish again the different problems. We need to establish a place to develop new ideas, because again we are with these issues in a, I cannot say conflict, but at opposite sides. Sustainable Development needs to have a common ground. You have to analyse each of the issues relating to Sustainable Development in the discussion of a relation to other topics. This can be a very interesting approach because searching in that relation you will find new places and possible new grounds that have not been developed yet.

Then I am sure everybody wants to move with new ideas and approaches. The problem is that nobody knows how, and that is why Rio+10 can be a wonderful option to establish preparatory

processes that includes different topics relating to Agenda 21 in a holistic approach. Everyone speaks of an inter-sectoral approach, everything is 'inter' today, but how to make it happen in practice? I hope that the that the process in preparation to Rio+10 will be the time to find these new approaches, that are holistic and this means we have to deal with complexities. This might be the best possibility to find this common place to resolve conflicts which have not been resolved before.

2002 has clearly been one of the most hotly followed issues in the last 2 weeks of the CSD. What do you think over the next 2 years should the inter-national community be addressing in terms of preparations?

I think that everyone should be prepared for the process. That everybody must start in advance for the process so that we can come to that meeting with the assessment of Agenda 21 already having been done and that we can find new developments and understand that we do not want to re-negotiate Agenda 21.

Agenda 21 must keep the CSD as it is, ...cont. on page 2

Contents	
Interview with the CSD 8 Chair	1
CSD 8 on Agriculture	2
CSD 8 on Finance	3
Beijing + 5 A UN Perspective	4
Beijing + 5 An NGO Perspective	5
Copenhagen + 5 A UN Perspective	6
Copenhagen + 5 An NGO Perspective	7
Energy at CSD 9	8
UNESCO's World Education Forum	9
UNEP GC Special Session	10
UNED-Forum's International Advisory Board Meeting	11
Events + Next Months Network	12

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The Agriculture Dialogue Sessions at CSD 8 proved a mixed blessing, with stakeholders finding consensus, whilst governments found indecision into the early hours. Peter Mann reports on where we go now.

The eighth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD8) has come and gone. From an NGO perspective, what did we achieve in terms of bringing forward Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (SARD)? Perhaps - less than we hoped, yet more than we expected.

More than we expected, firstly, in terms of the creation of a worldwide policy and action agenda to prepare CSD8 and the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogues (MSD). Between January 1999 and May 2000, a re-invigorated Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems (SAFS) Caucus helped to create this policy and action agenda through five papers prepared and presented at CSD8. We used the Internet as never before to disseminate these papers, get feedback from food and agriculture networks around the world, organize the MSD event, and mark out common

ground as well as disagreement between the stakeholders. The material we produced will help prepare a SARD agenda for Earth Summit 2002.

The Dialogues themselves at CSD between farmers, trade unions, business and NGOs - as well as governments - exceeded many expectations. We faced critical issues around sustainable food production and consumption, best practices, knowledge for a sustainable food system, and trade liberalization. Chair Juan Mayr Maldonado steered the dialogues through controversial issues of subsidies, biotechnology, and the alternatives to chemical-intensive agriculture.

In the Dialogues, Farmers from all over the world - including women farmers - told of their struggles. Trade

Unions described threats to the health, safety and basic dignity of farm workers. NGOs proposed links between producers and consumers to build a mass movement around food. Indigenous Peoples spoke of agriculture and land as central to their culture. Industry faced strong opposition on issues of biotech and trade liberalization, but shared best practices on sustainable agriculture.

Reactions to the MSD were overwhelmingly positive, and some governments in the high-level segment saw connections between CSD and what happened at the WTO meetings in Seattle, namely the struggle around a new paradigm for sustainable development.

Yet, in its official government negotiations, CSD achieved much less than we hoped. The battle around "multifunctionality" of land and agriculture

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but we need to find new ways to make the agenda to a more action orientated. I am sure that over the last 8 years there has been good progress in many places of Agenda 21. A lot of issues that have not had any kind of progress and some that are in the middle ground.

Trying also to look to the different international environment agreements that work in an isolated way, again to integrate them. I think that the word for Rio+10 must be co-ordination, integration and articulation. At the same time I see it would be a wonderful moment to increase political commitment and support to Sustainable Development. Civil society can start now to organise themselves in preparation for the Rio+10 and all these energies can be put towards this process.

We need clear guidance on common aspects so that all move. There will be a lot of wonderful movements, initiatives and so on, but with a lack of common ground.

By common ground do you mean overarching goals of the Summit?

Yes, if you put a lot of effort in a meeting to analyse agenda 21 that the direction of this meeting should have a common ground with other meetings. So that

its understandable for everybody and that its helpful for the process. I hope that all civil society can collaborate on this point.

The CSD has had a very packed agenda this year. How do you feel the CSD's agenda might be prioritised in the future?

I think that the CSD must be open-ended so that there is full participation of all countries. At the same time the CSD must recognise that the way it is organised has changed over time. So it's a continual process of improvement. Ministers from different sectors must [attend to] prove that not only environment ministers [are involved] but also other key departments for the high level so that the discussion are displayed in the different sectors.

Do you think there will need to be new institutional mechanisms after 2002, or do you feel its more a process of evolution for the CSD?

What we have seen that the institutional framework needs to reshape and evaluate after some years. I am sure that this could be very inconvenient for the role of the CSD the role of UNEP and other agencies involved in sustainable Development. At the

same time the possibility for different countries to have a debate on the role of institutions and on institutional changes or new additions could be very important. How to improve the institutions, its not only to change them but to improve and at the same time to move to a way that allows them to be in a realistic way with the new phenomenon's of this world.

Finally on a personal note, have you enjoyed yourself over the last 2 weeks? Has this been a good process for you?

I am a very dynamic person coming from the world of NGO's. So I have always a conflict between myself being a minister and coming to institutions that are forums for development. But I enjoy very much the multi-stakeholder dialogues. I found frustrating the high level agriculture segment, because there is no need to send ministers to hear speeches, they can be sent by email. What we need here is to increase dialogue to look for new options. What we have seen and what we know is that the problems we are experiencing need a lot of commitment a lot of energy and to act fast, because in some areas the gaps between solutions and problems have increased.

We have to look at this very carefully because this is high responsibility of all the leaders in our world.

MONEY FOR NOTHING!

Discussions on Finance at CSD 8 saw the return of familiar tensions. As Earth Summit 2002 approaches the need for progress in this field intensifies. Despite suggestions for an Intergovernmental Panel on Finance, few short term answers are likely. Sander van Bennekom offers a critique.

CSD 8 was the first occasion to evaluate the politically sensitive issue of finance and the global commitment to sustainable development since the Rio + 5 meeting in 1997. The ongoing decline in Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) from industrialised countries has taken away much of the enthusiasm for sustainability and implementing Agenda 21. Judging from CSD 8, the picture looks ominous for 2002 and we need a serious diplomatic effort to avoid a situation where the issue of finance renders the Summit in 2002 as superfluous before it even starts. The four biggest donors of ODA have all decreased their budgets and there is also doubt about the effectiveness of the current aid flows.

Needless to say, the quantitative aspects of development assistance are closely related to the qualitative side and this highly confuses the negotiations.

The introduction of the term 'good governance' is typical as a criterion for 'ODA worthy' countries in order to prevent the abuse of aid flows. This term is highly politicised since many donors are looking for an excuse to justify their dropping ODA budgets and there is no easier way than to refer to a rather general principle as 'good governance.' The diplomatic solution arrived upon at CSD 8 - a definition of effective, accountable, transparent and participatory instead of 'good' - deserves attention since it is more tangible. Application of these criteria should not only take place in recipient countries, but also in donor countries. A sizable portion of development assistance is directly linked to opportunities for corporations in donor countries, rather than sustainable development in recipient

countries. The agreement of a definition of good governance in relation to financing for sustainable development does not hide the fact that there is widespread disagreement about the relevance of the abovementioned principles.

Of course, the issue of finance includes much more than ODA and the notion that a country's domestic resources will be more important in achieving sustainability than foreign aid is still the basis for the negotiations. There is a lot to say about domestic resources, especially in the light of globalisation and the increasing dependence on the global market. This globalisation process creates opportunities for more resources for sustainability, but it also includes the risk of marginalization and instability.

As usual the report of the latest Expert Meeting on Financial Issues of Agenda 21 (Nairobi, 2000) includes a wealth of wisdom in analysis and ideas, both on traditional ODA, on investment and other capital flows. However, this is also an old conclusion, the gap between the expert meetings - a CSD initiative! - and the sessions of the CSD is as big as it ever was and the report hardly plays a role at the CSD. The political importance of this gap is recognized by many participants of the Expert Meetings. In the words of Mr Omotayo Olaniyan of the Organization of African Unity:

"There is a need for Africa to have tangible results by Rio + 10 in the year 2002. But this could only materialise if new ... methods are found to ... address the diverse problems of ODA and sustainable development

"There is a need for Africa to have tangible results by Rio + 10 in the year 2002. But this could only materialise if new ... methods are found to ... address the diverse problems of ODA and sustainable development. The dynamics of ODA

must be effectively harnessed to ensure that Africa will be fully part of the global sustainable development process" (Financing for sustainable development; Testing new policy approaches; background paper no 15, p.89).

There is little chance that the CSD alone can generate

such an approach and this makes a separate initiative on finance imperative for a successful meeting in 2002. Strangely, the 1997 idea for an intergovernmental panel on finance re-emerged, this time as a G-77 initiative. Most other countries felt that the overlap between this proposal the 'financing for development' meeting in 2001 was too large to convene such a panel so there was little support for it at CSD 8. However, the CSD can not avoid the broader questions on finance for sustainability in 2002 and this requires a fresh look at the proposal for an intergovernmental panel. Rio + 10 needs to have a better strategy on finance than Rio + 5 had. So far, the intergovernmental panel is the only proposal at the table and any delegation that intends to reject it should realize that they have the responsibility to come up with a solid alternative.

*Sander van Bennekom
Tools for Transition*

http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd8/csd8_decision.htm

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threatened to derail the CSD negotiations as it had done at preparatory meetings in Maastricht. The G77 and China, angry over the continued renege commitments of OECD countries in areas of food and agricultural trade, aid and technology, blocked possible agreements on language. The post-Seattle WTO impasse around trade and agriculture remained. The unresolved conflicts of the Earth Summit between North and South continue to play

themselves out. The original vision of SARD, and still more of the Alternative NGO Treaties for Sustainable Agriculture (19) and Food Security (20), seemed far away at the end of these gruelling two weeks of talk.

Yet at two in the morning of the final session on Saturday May 6, there was a potential breakthrough. Governments agreed to continue the multi-

stakeholder dialogue process to promote SARD and prepare CSD10 and Earth Summit 2002. The immediate scope if this initiative is modest, but NGOs see a potential opportunity to harness the energies of Major Groups for concrete action at the international, regional, national and local levels. The next two years will show how much we can accomplish.

Peter Mann

NGO Steering Committee's SAFS Caucus

BEIJING + 5 - GENDER EQUALITY: THE KEY TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Angela King, Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and Assistant to the Secretary-General, writes on the opportunity presented by Beijing + 5 to build increased gender equality into the sustainable development agenda.

It is no mistake that this fragile planet, hurtling through space, has been called “Mother Earth” from time immemorial. Our ancestors understood the earth’s nurturing role in the survival of early life forms – the nurturing role that through the generations has also been assigned to women.

But just as “Mother Earth” is changing because of environmental degradation which modern life on this planet has engendered, so it is with women. They too have had to face up to the challenges which a rapidly changing global environment has brought – in the home and at work.

The management of these enormous changes, which have characterized the second half of the last century, has been a priority of the United Nations since its establishment. In the intervening fifty years, it has been able to build an international consensus for action to advance the status of women worldwide and for the recognition of their essential role in the attainment of sustainable development and ecologically sound resource management.

One of the most important results of the Beijing process is that governments now accept that gender issues are integral components of development, human rights issues, conflict prevention and peace building. Secretary-General Kofi Annan who said recently “The commitments made by governments in Beijing reflect the understanding that women’s equality must be a central component of any attempt to solve the world’s social, economic and political problems” underlined this,

The special role of women in sustainable development and in environmental protection was recognized in Beijing. As one of the twelve critical areas of concern identified in the Platform for Action, women’s role in protecting the environ-

ment was closely linked to another vital issue, poverty. The Platform stated that poverty and environmental degradation were closely interrelated, and that worsening conditions, destroying fragile eco-systems and displacing communities, particularly in rural areas where many women work as unpaid agricultural workers, were exacerbating an already desperate situation.

The majority of the world’s poor are women, but they and poor men are too burdened with the task of daily survival and are

in no position to protect the environment. There is now recognition of the gender dimension of poverty and that there must be a gender perspective in all poverty eradication Programmes.

Many strategies to facilitate these perspectives have been adopted. These include awareness training programmes and seminars for women in the area of natural resource management and environmental protection. An increase in the involvement of women, particularly indigenous women, has also been reported by several governments, especially in the area of implementation of environmental projects.

These are some of the issues that will be on the table at the General Assembly special session “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace.” The negotiations will also cover women’s access to appropriate health care issues – such as maternal and pregnancy related issues and the lack of programmes to address HIV/AIDS among women in many parts of the world, particularly in Africa.

Access to education is another cru-

cial issue. Illiteracy and drop-out continues to affect women at a disproportionate rate, preventing their empowerment and denying them a participatory role in the upper echelons of decision-making and leadership.

Action to eradicate violence against women, which is increasing particularly in the home, will receive particular scrutiny. Trafficking of women and children for various purposes is now a critical emerging issue, occurring in all parts of the world and largely unreported. The increasing vulnerability of women and children in situations of armed conflict has bred a culture of peace among women. They are defining a new role for themselves as peacemakers and considerable actors in the UN humanitarian endeavors.

The purpose of the special session is to find out what has happened since Beijing and to plan future actions that will bring about gender equality, where women and men share fully the privileges as well as the responsibilities for their families, their societies and their countries.

The identification of the role of men in the evolution of efforts to advance the status of women has been one of the major outcomes of the Beijing process. It is now recognized that men have an integral role in this process and that women’s equality with men is a prerequisite for the achievement of sustainable human development.

That is why gender equality and empowerment of women remain high on the United Nations agenda. That is why I am confident that the special session will succeed in advancing the promotion of gender equality as an essential component in the search for solutions to development challenges. That is why I am confident that our deliberations in June will produce a result that will offer a successful conclusion to the past century’s efforts to attain gender equality, development and peace.

Angela E V King

Secretary-General Kofi Annan said recently “The commitments made by governments in Beijing reflect the understanding that women’s equality must be a central component of any attempt to solve the world’s social, economic and political problems”

Beijing + 5: Watch this space

At Beijing + 5 the world will take stock of the progress made in achieving greater gender equality. Valerie Evans reports to Network 2002 on governments current indifference in seizing this opportunity to undertake an honest reflection on progress and to set an agenda for future action.

Non-governmental organisations from around the world were well represented at this years highly significant meeting of the United Nation's Commission on the Status of Women in March. The meeting was divided into two parts; for the first four days government delegations dealt with Commission business and then for the remainder of the three weeks the Commission turned itself into a PrepCom for the Special Session of the UN General Assembly to be held in New York in June. This Special Session entitled 'Women 2000: Gender equality, development and peace for the 21st Century, known for short as 'Beijing + 5' will review progress made by the countries of in meeting their commitments to the Beijing Platform for Action.

The work of the PrepCom was mainly concerned with the production of a document to agree the progress made since the great conference in 1995. A draft document prepared by the UN Secretariat based on the answers to an UN questionnaire that member states had completed had been circulated earlier in the year and some negotiating groups of States had arrived with an already agreed position paper. At CSW 1999 NGOs had agreed to write alternative reports to supplement their government's response to the UN questionnaire.

The draft proposed outcome document for the General Assembly which was debated at CSW was divided into four parts, part 1, an introduction, part 2, achievements and obstacles, part 3, current challenges, and most important of all part 4, actions and initiatives needed to overcome obstacles and to achieve the full and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. In other words part 4 gives civil society and the governments an agenda to take in to the new millennium.

After much build up, high expectations, numerous discussions and negotiations the Prep Com did **not** manage to achieve an agreed final document. Delegates and NGOs left on Friday March 17th with a massive 83 page document in which most of the material is 'in brackets' which means for each point or issue alterna-

tive pieces of prose are offered by the various negotiating groups of states. Further work will now be done by government representatives in meetings called 'inter-sessionals' up to and possibly at the Special Session itself. We can only hope that there will be an agreed outcome document to be presented to the General Assembly in June.

Following the negotiations is a slow painstaking process that can be compared to 'watching paint dry' and it is amazing how sensitive one becomes to the subtleties of language and punctuation and the differing interpretations put on words by governments representing different cultures. There were lengthy discussions on sexual and reproductive health and rights but there were subtle shifts in the positions of several African and Latin American countries toward more open support for these references. Proposals on targets and indicators made for difficulties when both NGOs and some governments called for specific numbers to back up ideas expressed in the Programme for Action. There was an agreement on the principle of time bound targets and measurable goals but not on the use of specific numbers.

But what of the NGOs? Some 260 NGOs with around 1300 representatives from many countries and all the regions of the world were present for all or part of the time. By the third week papers with lobbying points were produced by the caucuses and were fed into the official negotiations through whichever route the NGOs thought they could use. The importance of having NGO representatives on a government delegation now becomes clear. The NGO discussions in themselves provided valuable insight and increased understanding of issues and the concerns of women around the world. They gave added vigour and commitment to carry forward equality for women. The participation of the NGOs was strongly acclaimed by the UN Assistant Secretary General and Special Adviser on Gender Issues Angela King and other delegations on the final day. Unfortunately there was a

downside to NGO participation as in the second week a group of about 400 representing a few NGOs arrived at the UN with what appeared to be the sole purpose of disrupting activities in the name of 'the family'. In the closing Plenary the EU Japan, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand and Mexico issued a strongly worded statement on those who had attempted to undermine the work being done; the EU called for greater tolerance and dialogues in good faith as part of a common striving for a better world.

It is impossible at this stage to come to any formal conclusion on 'where we are'. During the PrepCom there was some discussion as to whether the Beijing + 5 process could be effective, it being impossible to conduct a review in a highly politicised arena where different groups cannot agree even on basic measurements of progress. There were problems in the 5 year reviews of Cairo and Rio and the Beijing process is even more ambitious than those because not only does it attempt to forge a consensus on future actions but also it aims to bring governments to negotiated agreements on their achievements and failures.

It is however hoped that the review will at least reaffirm the core ideas of the Beijing Platform for Action given the firm consensus on avoiding the re-negotiation of existing agreements. Also certain trends on critical issues have begun to emerge. The outcome document has put forward stronger language on poverty and economics with these issues seen as cross cutting rather than sectoral. There is of course disagreement about fundamental economic structures but there is a growing consensus on the need to address the disproportionate impact of poverty on women. There is also agreement on the need to take holistic approaches to entrenched problems such as violence against women and an indication that greater emphasis will be placed on the role of men in gender equality

Valerie Evans.

Copenhagen + 5: The Social Development Marathon

Social Development returns to the international conference arena in Geneva next month. Randolph Ryan, a consultant to the UN Dept. of Soc. Policy & Dev. looks at possible outcomes for the 5 year review.

A UN Perspective on Geneva 2000

Old questions surface once again: Is the glass half empty or half full? Has the five-year review of Copenhagen been worthwhile?

Those who have hoped that the special session in Geneva would radically strengthen the 1995 Copenhagen Declaration are quite certain to be disappointed. After months of arduous negotiations, the process of hammering out the language of a Geneva consensus was just a bit more than halfway complete as of late May, and the value that had been added to the Copenhagen text was questionable.

True, timetables for social development adopted by the OECD in 1996 had been accepted as UN targets and there was reason to hope that the document would contain some general endorsement of the concept of a currency transaction tax (a so-called "Tobin Tax"), to curb financial speculation. Overall, however, the Geneva improvements were euphemistic and vague.

Before becoming too pessimistic, however, one needs to think realistically about the art of the possible. Economic powers like the US, the EU and Japan have no real sense of urgency about social development. Moreover, the Group of 77, which represents the developing countries, is not an effective lobbying group because it represents countries at widely different points on the development spectrum. This being the case, it is not realistic to expect ground-breaking progress at a follow-up session like the Geneva special session.

Sudden breakthroughs are almost unheard of, anyway, in multi-lateral diplomacy, except possibly at summit meetings where powerful leaders are in agreement. And far from being chiefs of state, the negotiators preparing the Geneva declaration are harried mid-level diplomats answering to a multitude of ministries with varied national priorities. This means that with the best of intentions, there simply is not enough clout in this process for big decisions to be made.

It is not enough for Civil Society Organisations to arrive at a conference with a quiver of good ideas. Delegates may read and be impressed by the position papers, but when it comes to drafting, they are responding to instructions from home.

In the absence of a common stand by groups such as the G-77 (which now includes 134 disparate developing countries) it is easy for the industrialized countries to avoid and evade. To take one example, although many economists may think a "Tobin Tax" which would discourage financial speculation and accumulate resources for development is a fine idea, many of the countries that are supposed to benefit are quite ambivalent about it. Many developing countries fear that such a tax could represent another layer of control and conditionality, much like environmental and core labour standards which the industrialized countries are touting, but which the developing countries experience as protectionism in disguise.

One potential area of advance at Geneva is an expansion of the concept to debt relief to cover middle-income countries. Although Japan and the US have taken a hard line in their opposition to this, the opposition of the European Union is more nuanced. A reference to debt relief survived in the review-and-appraisal section of the Geneva Declaration, although the new initiatives section and the political declaration were incomplete.

One inherent weakness of the Copenhagen agenda is its extraordinary breadth, which means that the follow-up is diffuse. If the agenda could be narrowed by setting tactical priorities, negotiations would be more hard-edged, and outcomes more concrete.

The implications for civil society organizations are plain. Before bright ideas can be the basis of a political campaign, the presumed beneficiaries need to understand them and support them. The least hint of neo-colonial arrogance -- "this is for your own

good" -- tends to backfire.

It is not enough for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to arrive at a conference with a quiver of good ideas. Delegates may read and be impressed by the position papers, but when it comes to drafting, they are responding to instructions from home. By the time the conference (or the preparatory committee starts) the outcome is largely decided.

Rather than to break through the ceiling and raise the roof, a more realistic objective for the Geneva special session is to nail down the flooring, so that the Copenhagen commitments to people-centered sustainable development are placed on a solid platform of broadening international consensus, even if they are not yet implemented. This goal, less ambitious but more realistic, is within reach.

A realistic approach for civil society organizations that wish to influence a conference such as this requires that prioritizing, planning and politicking be initiated well in advance. The weightier the new idea, the more the ground needs to be seeded at home, as Canadian CSOs seem to have done in the case of the currency transaction tax.

To be effective CSOs need to think strategically, to form alliances and to express themselves through caucuses. If it is too late for that at Geneva, planning should be underway for subsequent UN meetings such as the Millennium Assembly in September, the scheduled High-Level Event on Financing for Development in 2001, and the 10-year follow-up to the Earth Summit in 2002.

Although the progress registered in Geneva will inevitably fall far short of CSO aspirations the special session could still be judged a success if CSOs learn from this experience and do better next time.

They will have plenty of opportunities to rethink strategy and fine-tune tactics. Social development is a marathon, not a sprint.

Randolph Ryan

<http://www.geneva2000.org/>

Copenhagen + 5: A Call for Action on an Anti-Poverty Pact

Stephen King, Director of the ICSW, outlines what could be possible at WSSD+5 with a little political will.

AN NGO Perspective on Geneva 2000

The World Summit for Social Development (WSSD), held in 1995 in Copenhagen, agreed an extensive and ambitious set of commitments. Three key issues were addressed by the WSSD; eradication of poverty, promotion of full employment and fostering of social integration.

Five years on, a Special Session of the UN General Assembly will meet in Geneva to review progress on the implementation of the Copenhagen commitments. A number of Preparatory Committee meetings have been convened in New York over the past year. Member states have been preparing reports on their own national progress and UN agencies have been compiling information on various aspects of the WSSD.

Civil society organisations have played an important role in monitoring the implementation of the Copenhagen agreements and advocating policies and initiatives within the review process. Amongst these is the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW), a global alliance of civil society organisations promoting social development, social justice and social welfare worldwide. Over the past five years, ICSW has placed an emphasis on strengthening the input of CSOs into the UN's review of implementation of the Copenhagen Summit.

During this period it has convened more than 20 civil society forums throughout the world, in order to discuss civil society perspectives on the progress towards achieving the Copenhagen commitments and to agree priority recommendations for action to meet the targets agreed at the WSSD. The key findings of each meeting have been published as a forum report in our series of publications, "Copenhagen Papers", and have stimulated three priority points for discussion at Geneva 2000, in particular a major new initiative – the Anti-Poverty Pact.

ICSW's Priorities for Geneva 2000

ICSW has strongly advocated that the Geneva process should focus on initiatives in three key areas:

Governance - Strengthening of the ECOSOC System

For a number of reasons, ECOSOC has largely failed thus far to fulfill its responsibilities and potentialities. In order to play a leading role in economic and social policy at the international level, it is essential that:

- ◆ ECOSOC either strengthens the size, role and effectiveness of its Bureau or develops some other mechanism which enables prompt, focused and vigorous action to be taken without calling a full Council meeting of more than 50 members;
- ◆ effective use is made of opportunities for greater interaction with the Bretton Woods institution and the World Trade Organisation, and also with emerging groupings of nations such as the Group of 20;
- ◆ ECOSOC seeks closer engagement with regional groupings outside the UN system, such as the European Union, Southern African Development Community and Association of South East Asian Nations.

Standards – Establishing International Standards for Social Development

There is a clear need to improve the profile, status and effective implementation of existing standards or principles relating to social development. This would be facilitated by the inclusion, without renegotiation, of those of special value and importance within a special new framework of **International Standards for Social Development**. Some existing agreements would have to be supplemented before being included in such a framework and, in order to recognise the profound impact of economic policies and practices on social development, it would be essential to also incorporate issues such as taxation, financial regulation and business conduct.

Targets and Resources – Adopting an International Anti-Poverty Pact

The WSSD did identify some specific anti-poverty targets, but these were not given prominence in the fi-

nal agreement. However, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) agreed a number of International Development Targets for achievement by 2015. ICSW believes that these targets could realistically be achieved, if significant action is initiated urgently and substantial resources and support committed. An **International Anti-Poverty Pact** would include developed and developing countries, as well as international financial institutions, and would involve commitments to the mobilisation of resources as well as to the anti-poverty outcomes specified in the International Development Targets. The mobilisation of resources should embrace both international and national resources, developed and developing countries' resources, and public sector, private sector and individual resources. Specific action should be taken in seven areas:

- ◆ Official development assistance
- ◆ Debt cancellation
- ◆ Taxation of speculative financial transactions
- ◆ Implementation of trade agreements
- ◆ Reductions in military expenditure
- ◆ Anti-corruption systems
- ◆ Land reform

ICSW has argued strongly that governments should agree the key elements of an **International Anti-Poverty Pact** in Geneva and should establish a task force to prepare a detailed draft for consideration and finalisation at the Millennium Session of the General Assembly later this year. ECOSOC should take responsibility for finalising and monitoring this Pact.

It is vital that the document drafted by the Preparatory Committee for approval by the Special Session incorporates these three priorities for action. Geneva 2000 must focus not only on what has been achieved in the past five years but also on establishing realistic and priority actions for the future. These three over-arching priorities seek to catalyse long-term substantial improvements, especially of a preventive nature, rather than focusing on narrower, short-term responses.

Stephen King,

Energising the Process

- Preparations for CSD 9 -

With CSD 8 behind us, CSD 9 is just around the corner. Energy will be one of the key issues at next years session. Network 2002 interviews Stephen Lowe of the UK Dept. for Env. Transport & the Regions on preparations so far.

The CSD 8 Intersessional was extended this year to include an Inter-governmental Group of Experts Meeting in preparation for CSD 9. What was the outcome of that process?

The question we are left with after the intersessional is where is the focus going to be? The intersessional did flush out a lot of issues, but didn't give much focus the debate in the run up to CSD 9. The idea of having the extra meeting (after CSD 8 Intersessional) in recognition of the fact that Energy is a difficult issue and needed good preparation. Because of how the intersessional went, we lost a lot of time, and I suspect that we'll come back to the Intersessional for CSD 9 with much work still to do.

So where does the process go now in the run up to CSD 9?

In terms of the CSD Energy process the next meeting is at the CSD 9 intersessional. Interim meetings will be used to continue the discussion). The impression of the Secretariat was that this is an invitation for governments to host specific meetings to continue the process. Austria has at this stage expressed an interest in hosting a meeting later in the year.

There will of course be a cross over between Transport and Atmosphere at CSD 9 and other forums hosting discussions on these issues can be used to feed into the Energy debate. With all these processes going on there is a danger of them repeating each other. As at CSD 8, where the positions on some issues were entrenched from the beginning and we found ourselves referring back to agreed language from other forums, we need to see what CSD can add to existing work and discussions.

One important element throughout this process will be the need for meaningful

participation of the South in order for these events to be meaningful and to be recognised at the right level at the CSD next year. Of course this will require funding and that is something those running these meeting need to bear in mind.

Industry has been involved to some degree already and could have a big part to play in the final discussions. What role does industry, as well as other stakeholders, have in preparation for CSD 9 on Energy?

We are also talking with other governments about how to bring in Business to the discussions. I think it has to be facilitated, in getting industry to the table. This has not been the greatest success of

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previous CSD's. Civil society is already quite active in a number of these international forums already and should continue to be represented at the interim meetings taking place between now and the CSD 9 Intersessional. A lot of International Organisations as well as other governments are quite receptive to this, especially if your looking at things like Energy for Rural markets.

The differences between the needs of developed, developing and transitional countries for energy are huge. The CSD debate must be flexible and dynamic in order to meet this challenge and move away from resorting to agreed text. How can this be made possible?

That's the problem. In order to get away from that we need to have a few goals in key areas. At the intersessional

we ended up with a huge list for things to look at. I hope that between now and then, these other interim meetings can focus the agenda. Obviously there will be people pushing for renewable energy which will be one of the key things to be considered.

It's a question of finding the right balance for each country, and what you want to get away from is the North/South tensions. Also the whole of this issue could be guided by traditional discussions on Technology Transfer, Capacity Building and Financial Resources. The group of experts needs to draw in more representatives and experts from the different regions to broaden the debate.

Given that this will take place in the run up to Rio+10 where there will be a lot of focus on financial resources and Rio commitments, there is a real danger this could all overshadow the Energy debate.

Another thing that's on the provisional agenda for the next session, which could be really useful is the idea of learning from other countries and exchanging experience. And this doesn't have to be N-S tech. Transfer based, but could also be S-S initiatives. This again is another area where we can get industry involved where there are success stories based on the right solutions.

The Secretariat has had CSD 8, and now CSD 9 & 10 and is in danger of being over-subscribed. So discussion carried forward at the regional level could be very useful. What CSD could do is to bring some of these strands together, so these other processes working on Energy, Transport and Atmosphere, both within the UN and outside, complement each other and are more integrated.

<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/enr>

Hard Lessons for the Worlds Educators

UNESCO's Director General, Koricho Matsuu, writes on the worlds education challenges and priorities, as addressed at the recent World Education Forum in Dakar.

Delegates to the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, addressed a pressing problem: how to promote basic education in developing countries that stand to be excluded from the "knowledge economy".

The world's political, social and economic climate has changed considerably since world leaders met in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990 and pledged to achieve "education for all" by the year 2000. In the 1990s, basic education was all too often sidelined as countries entered the fast-moving world of economic, financial and technological interconnectedness known as globalisation.

For a variety of reasons - lack of commitment or misdirected effort - basic education targets have, in many cases, not been met. In fact, education for all has often been seen as a burden by governments trying to adjust to the demands of global competition.

Nevertheless, a considerable effort has been made. If there is one thing that the international community can be proud of, it is the now universal consensus that development depends on investments in education.

But just as governments have now accepted the "education paradigm", developing countries are facing yet another challenge: the knowledge economy.

They are increasingly left behind as developed countries focus on high-tech products and services. The knowledge economy offers exponential returns on investment in education and will thus widen the gap between rich and poor countries. The latter, still struggling to promote literacy, are unable to invest in higher, technology-oriented education programmes.

Knowledge and wealth may become increasingly concentrated. A study by

the Massachusetts Institute of Technology illustrates this trend: MIT graduates have started over 4,000 businesses that, in 1994, employed 1.1m people and, with \$232bn in annual sales, were equivalent to the world's 24th largest economy. Such wealth creation can also be found in the developing world: an example is the remarkable boom in India's software industry, with its highly trained computer specialists.

The education success story in India, as in South Korea and a number of other developing countries, lies in their ability to make hard choices. By allocating limited resources to different parts of the education sector, they are trying to provide basic education for all while gaining a foothold in the knowledge economy.

No country can afford to refrain from technology-oriented educational investment, however urgent its basic educational needs. What lessons does this situation hold for the Dakar conference?

First, governments, donors and the private sector can no longer regard educational investment as a no-return or low-return welfare duty. Second, basic education has to be a priority where people are still deprived of essential learning skills, while being part of a continuum that includes secondary, technical and higher education.

Third, investment in education will now have to be geared towards the knowledge economy. This concerns all developing countries, whatever their performance over the past decade in the field of basic education.

It is not enough to wait and hope for a trickle-down effect. Education strategies must be monitored closely to ensure that best use is made of lim-

ited funds. Targeted investment in specialised fields and institutions of learning must be balanced with investment in basic education for all.

Even though many countries cannot hope to do everything at once, they must be helped to put in place all the essential steps between basic and higher education, between literacy and high-tech research. If we lose the connecting links between basic education for all and the high-powered knowledge economy, we risk opening a chasm between poor and rich countries.

This is a lesson that no country can afford to ignore. While there is an urgent need for the wealthiest nations to support basic education in the developing world, the quality and content of basic education in every society need to rise to a standard that equips learners throughout life to live in a world of increasing complexity and rapid change.

More of the same will not be enough. We have to put basic education on an entirely new level - on national and international policy agendas. We have to make a quantum leap in ensuring that the content of basic education is of the highest quality, relevant, adapted to today's world and - as far as possible - aimed at offering further learning opportunities.

Above all, we have to understand that it would be to no one's advantage to allow the knowledge economy to break the world up into small islands of wealth surrounded by a sea of want. If the knowledge economy is not to become a self-limiting and ultimately sterile process of enrichment for a minority, we have to make sure that developing countries get both basic education and a foothold in the knowledge economy.

Kochiro Matsuu

This article was first published in the Financial Times on April 26th

UNEP Returns Home - The Malmö GC

UNEP Returns to its birthplace in Sweden where the Global Ministerial Forum will be putting key issues on Millennium Agenda. The Governing Council Special Session will bring Ministers together from around the world to catalyse the international action of all stakeholders on environment issues in preparation for Earth Summit 2002 and beyond.

The world's environment ministers will meet in Malmö, Sweden at the end of May for the first *Global Ministerial Environment Forum*. Hosted by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) the two-day meeting is a unique opportunity for ministers to set their priorities for international cooperation on the growing number of environmental challenges facing the global community.

“The results of the Forum – and in particular a Malmö Declaration – will provide an essential input to the UN's Millennium General Assembly in September and the Rio+10 summit in 2002,” said UNEP's Executive Director, Klaus Töpfer, adding that “together, these results will guide the global agenda for environment and sustainable development for years to come”.

Forum discussions will cut across a number of economic and social sectors in three broad themes:

Major environmental challenges in the new century

The basis for this theme is UNEP's second *Global Environment Outlook Report 2000* (GEO-2000), a comprehensive analysis of the state of the global environment and an authoritative assessment of the environmental crisis facing humanity in the new millennium. (Read the complete report at www.unep.org/Geo2000/). Environmental challenges identified in GEO-2000 include the human use of non-renewable energy, over-extraction of water and timber from forests, and the loss of biodiversity - all of which are currently unsustainable. There are new challenges as well, including such ‘hot-button’ issues as the development and use of genetically modified organisms.

Major environmental challenges are associated with three current global trends: resource depletion and environmental degradation; increasing income disparity; and increasing poverty in a global population projected to increase by 65% over the next 50 years.

The environmental challenges of the

new century raise a number of issues including the policies, trade-offs and financial investment priorities needed to address major environmental challenges; the extent of applying the ‘precautionary principle; and the ways new technologies, particularly new information technologies, can dramatically lower environmental impacts.

The private sector and the environment in the 21st Century

As society's most powerful institution for technical and social change, commerce in the 21st Century is a vital element to restore environmental values and create industries and markets based on the principles of sustainable development. “This process must happen within the context of increasing globalisation and trade liberalisation that is, itself, a potent force generating both positive and negative economic, environmental and social impacts,” Dr Töpfer told Network 2002.

Governments, he added, will be challenged to set the correct regulatory frameworks to encourage the cleanest industries and businesses. This will entail substantial efforts, including the removal of hundreds of billions of dollars in perverse subsidies that currently prohibit prices from telling the ecological truth.

Issues surrounding this theme include the role and extent of partnerships between governments and the private sector as tools to promote sustainable development, methods to incorporate environmental objectives into the routine operation of all enterprises; and ways the private sector can help developing countries ‘leapfrog’ the previous environmental mistakes of developed countries,

Environmental responsibility and role of civil society in a globalised world

The term ‘civil society’ refers to the range of organisations within a

society. These include industry associations, trade unions, commercial associations, employers' organizations, professional associations, advocacy groups, co-operatives, research institutions, community-based organisations, religious groups and the media.

While recognizing the importance of cultural diversity and differing development paths, Forum participants may explore how local communities, non-governmental organizations, the media, and the general public at large could promote a global consensus on ways to tackle shared environmental problems, such as the loss of biodiversity, climate change, and land degradation.

This theme also raise issues of how new forms of information technology will change the way civil groups communicate to promote their agendas as well as the ways a greater role for civil society will change national and international institutions such as the United Nations.

Ministerial discussion will be enhanced with special keynote addresses by global leaders from academia, business and industry, and civil groups. Speakers include

Charles Alexander, Senior International Editor of *Time* Magazine;

Gunnar Brock, President and CEO, TetraPak International;

Jürgen Dormann, CEO of Aventis corporation;

Yolanda Kakabadse, President of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN);

Masashi Kaneko, CEO of Nikko Securities;

Martin Khor, Director of the Third World Network.

Professor Mario Molina from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology;

Dr. M.S. Swaminathan, Chair, of the M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, and

Further background can be found on the Web at: www.unep.org/malmo/

Inaugural Meeting Augurs Well

UNED-Forum's 'Towards Earth Summit 2002' Project convened the first meeting of its International Advisory board during the CSD. Board members from around the world, representing all stakeholders met to discuss the how the project can best work to service all in preparation for Rio +10 in 2002.

The inaugural meeting of UNED Forum's new International Advisory Board took place during CSD 8, on Friday 28th April at the Rockefeller Foundation, and was undoubtedly a success. This new Board¹ is made up of invited members who will guide the work of UNED's new Towards Earth Summit 2002 project, which attempts to aid international major groups' mobilisation for Earth Summit 2002.

Many organisations with a long and distinguished reputation in sustainable development work have agreed to sit on the Board², and a full listing appears at the bottom of this article. Also, Chip Lindner and Ashok Khosla, the former Director and Chair of the Centre For Our Common Future, which spearheaded major groups' activity around Rio and in the years directly following it, are both contributing their considerable knowledge to the Board.

Chaired by Derek Osborn, this first meeting was essentially a time for introduction, brainstorming and for UNED Forum to present initial plans and information resources to the Board. In return the Board offered feedback, to enhance outreach, participation and accessibility of these.

Mr Gordon Conway of the Rockefeller Foundation opened the meeting, and was followed by Klaus Töpfer of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Mr Töpfer stressed the importance - if the failures of Rio +5 are to be avoided - of raising international visibility of Earth Summit 2002 and of generating momentum in government, United Nations and civil society spheres. He also stressed the need for Earth Summit 2002 to produce concrete outcomes in the form of action plans, especially regarding financial issues, which he perceives as needing to be one of the central issues of the Summit.

Each Board Member presented their own organisation to the Board and gave some indication of their organisation's plans regarding Earth Summit 2002. Each organisation has its own networks, resources and information provision services, often in a specific geographical region or information area. As such, the aim is to use the Towards Earth Summit 2002 project to provide a forum for each of these 'comparative advantages' to be linked, and to therefore maximise outreach and encourage participation in all stakeholder groups. Therefore the

Project is not aiming at advocacy but at service provision - facilitating new, and maximising use of existing, resources.

The next step, now this introductory meeting is over and a general framework outlined, is for UNED staff to analyse the comparative advantage of each member organisation and to begin working with the Board on integrating these advantages to an overall outreach plan.

Beth Hiblin

1. The International Advisory Board is an advisory group only and has no legal obligation. Liability for the work of UNED Forum remains with the UK Executive Committee and UNED's parent organisation, the United Nations Association of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

2. It is hoped that the board will eventually be representative in terms of the nine major groups identified in Agenda 21, as well as being gender and geographically balanced. It is expected that equity will increase as the Board grows over time. Rather than become side-tracked by these legitimacy issues the Board indicated that it would rather concern itself with discussing plans for 2002 and concrete concerns regarding this.

UNED Forum wishes to thank all of the International Advisory Board members, as well as the Rockefeller Foundation for accommodating the meeting.

International Advisory Board: Arab Network for Environment & Development *Emad Adly** Baha'i International Community *Peter Adriance** formerly Centre for Our Common Future *Chip Lindner** Centre for Science & Environment *Sunita Narain* Centro de Estudios Ambientales *Maria Onestini** CSD NGO Education Caucus *Trevor Harvey** Development Alternatives *Ashok Khosla* Eco Accord *Victoria Elias** Environment and Development Action (Maghreb) *Magdi Ibrahim** Environment Liaison Centre International *Barbara Gemmill** Friends of the Earth Scotland *Kevin Dunion* International Chamber of Commerce *Paul Clement Hunt* International Confederation of Free Trade Unions *Lucien Royer** International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives *Jeb Brugman** International Council for Social Welfare *Stephen King* International Institute for Environment and Development *Nigel Cross** International Institute for Sustainable Development *Kimo Langston James Goree VI** International Partners for Sustainable Agriculture *Linda Elswick** IUCN – World Conservation Network *Scott Hajost** Liaison Committee of Development NGOs to the EU *James Mackie** NEXT Communications *Yusuf Asmal* Norwegian Forum for Environment and Development *Jan Gustav Strandenæs** Participatory Research in Asia *Rajesh Tandon** Peace Child International *David Woollcombe** Poptel Worldwide *Malcolm Corbett** Stockholm Environment Institute *Johannah Bernstein** Sustainable Development International *Peter Ritchie** UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs *Nitin Desai* UNED Forum [Chair] *Derek Osborn** UNED Forum *Margaret Brusasco Mackenzie** UNED Forum/UNA *Malcolm Harper* UN Environment Programme *Klaus Töpfer** Women's Environment and Development Organisation *June Zeitlin** Women's Super Coalition *Jan Peterson** World Business Council for Sustainable Development *Claude Fussler** WWF International *Gordon Shepherd*. It is hoped that the following will agree to join in the near future: Asia Indigenous Women's Network & Cordilleras Peoples Alliance *Victoria Tauli Corpuz* International Indian Treaty Council *Carol Kalafatic*.

* Represented at meeting

Diary Dates, Events & Conferences

June 4th-11th: Workshop on Sustainable Tourism Indicators
Beruwala Sri Lanka, Contact: <http://www.world-tourism.org/>

June 5th-9th: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the 21st Century,
Beijing + 5 Review, New York USA.
Contact: www.un.org/womenwatch/followup/beijing5/index.html

June 26th-30th: World Summit for Social Development & Beyond,
Copenhagen + 5, Geneva Switzerland
Contact: www.un.org/esa/socdev/geneva2000/index.html

26th-28th June: Partnerships in the New Economy, Paris France
Contact: <http://www.oecd.org/Forum2000/>

June 28th-July 2nd: Global Cities 21 - ICLEI World Congress of Local
Governments, Sachsen-Anhalt Germany, Contact: www2.iclei.org/gc21

1st-3rd July: First World Water Congress of the International Water Association
Paris France, Contact: http://www.iawq.org.uk/confs/200007paris_a.htm

1st-7th July: World Renewable Energy Conference, Brighton UK
Contact: <http://www.wrenuk.co.uk/brighton/brighton.html>

11th-13th July: 20th Open Ended Working Group Meeting of the Montreal Protocol
Geneva Switzerland, Contact: <http://www.unep.ch/ozone/20oewg.htm>

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

- ▶ **UNEP's Governing Council Special Session - Outcomes and Analysis**
- ▶ **Beijing + 5 - Outcomes and Analysis.**
- ▶ **Copenhagen + 5 - Outcomes and Analysis.**
- ▶ **Earth Summit 2002 - Post CSD, Pre General Assembly**
- ▶ **Report on the Rio+ 8 NGO Forum**

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 - Your Input is our Output. Contact the editor at:

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Network 2002 is also available online at:

www.earthsummit2002.org

