

CSD SURVEY



BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

APRIL 2003

THE FUTURE OF THE CSD: SURVEY REPORT

Stakeholder Forum

April 2003



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INTRODUCTION

One of the key outcomes from the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) was the call to strengthen the role of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), and in particular to:

"Enable implementation at all levels, including promoting and facilitating partnerships involving Governments, international organizations and relevant stakeholders for the implementation of Agenda 21".

At the eleventh session of the CSD (28th April - 9th May 2003), governments will gather to discuss many of the options for the Commission's future programme of work in following-up the commitments made at Johannesburg.

As a contribution to this discussion on the future of the CSD, Stakeholder Forum has conducted an international survey of stakeholders and governments. The survey was carried out through a written questionnaire that was emailed to stakeholders, intergovernmental bodies and governments through various e-groups (e.g. CSD / WSSD caucuses) and to direct contacts. It was restricted to email outreach due to limitations of time and resources.

The results of the survey have been compiled here into a summary and a full report. The report aims to provide an initial outline of some stakeholder preferences regarding the future structure and activities of the CSD. It also includes direct references to some of the respondents' comments or suggestions for alternative approaches. Stakeholder Forum would like to thank all those who contributed to this project and responded to the questionnaire.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From the email outreach responses were received from a broad range of organisations. The largest proportion of responses came from Non-Governmental Organisations, with good representation from Inter-Governmental Organisations, the Scientific and Technical community, and Education and Academia. Below summarises their views about the Commission on Sustainable Development based on the survey.

1. Agenda

- *General* - There was a clear consensus from all respondents that the CSD should focus on policy discussions and facilitation of Implementation activities as SEPARATE processes during the CSD biennial process. Monitoring was recognised as an important component for BOTH policy and implementation activities.
- *Issues* - The popular preference for issues that the CSD should focus on in policy discussions, implementation processes and monitoring was fairly clear – that it should predominately address AGENDA 21, CSD AND JOHANNESBURG COMMITMENTS, as opposed to specific areas such as the WEHAB agenda (water, energy, health, agriculture and biodiversity) or just the Johannesburg targets.
- *Number of Topics* - The large majority of respondents indicated that over the proposed two-year cycle they would like the CSD to cover TWO to THREE policy themes or topics, and THREE implementation topics.
- *Crosscutting Issues* – Respondents were generally supportive of the option that crosscutting policy issues should be addressed “through the lens of sectoral topics”.
- *Consultation On Specific Topic Focus* - In terms of whether there should be PRIOR CONSULTATION about the specific focus of a particular policy discussion, the majority of respondents definitely agreed that this was a necessary step.
- *Stakeholder Participation* - In terms of policy discussions stakeholders generally agreed in the need for greater participation and indicated a particular preference to the proposal of holding JOINT ministerial and stakeholder roundtables. In the implementation processes, the most popular preference was for the CSD to PROMOTE GOOD PRACTICE in partnerships and initiatives. Along the same lines as policy discussion, a larger group of respondents selected the option of holding JOINT reviews by stakeholders and governments in order to monitor progress. A majority of respondents also agreed that the CSD should encourage COMMON PRINCIPLES for stakeholder participation at all levels, and that all stakeholder processes should use SKILLED FACILITATORS.

2. Institutional Mechanisms

- *Issue-Focused Commissions or Task Forces* - In general the majority of respondents preferred the option of convening JOINT government and stakeholder commissions for both policy discussions and monitoring, rather than simply some form of inter-governmental forum.
- *Implementation Workshops / Forums* - The option for convening international, regional and sub-regional workshops supporting implementation processes was popular. The proposal for establishing exchange programmes was less popular but still a majority of respondents *definitely agreed* with the option.
- *Venue* - In terms of the proposal of convening CSD policy discussions in the margins of relevant Agenda 21 task manager processes, a majority of respondents definitely agreed with the idea.

- *Resources* - There was a general preference from respondents that policy, implementation and monitoring processes (facilitated by the CSD) should be mainly supported by sufficient government and intergovernmental funds, as opposed to stakeholder funds.
- *Government Attendance* - Respondents generally supported the need for both attendance and coordination of relevant government departments in CSD policy discussions and implementation processes.
- *Independent Review* - Respondents definitely supported the option of using independent, non-governmental, review bodies to monitor progress in implementation and policy.
- *CSD Membership* - A majority of respondents *definitely agreed* that the CSD should have UNIVERSAL government membership.
- *CSD Bureau* - Respondents generally agreed that the CSD Bureau should be elected for the entire duration of the proposed two-year cycle.

3. Other Institutional Proposals

- *United Nations* - The proposals for re-establishing the Interagency Committee on Sustainable Development; linking the General Assembly's second and third committees; and replacing the current UN Trusteeship Council with a Sustainable Development Council were all supported by the majority of respondents.
- *Non-UN International Institutions* - Respondents gave even stronger support for the increased involvement of the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and World Trade Organisation in the follow-up to Johannesburg. The majority definitely agreed that these institutions should have to report their activities to ECOSOC.
- *Regional Bodies* - a majority of respondents *definitely agreed* that there should be JOINT facilitation by the UN Regional Commissions AND UNEP REGIONAL OFFICES for regional policy, implementation and monitoring processes.
- *National Bodies* - The majority of respondents *definitely agreed* that national, regional (sub-national) and local sustainable development commissions (or councils) required additional financial support from governments and intergovernmental bodies to follow-up Johannesburg commitments.



METHODOLOGY

Structure

The survey was divided into four sections:

1. Policy
2. Implementation
3. Monitoring
4. Other Institutional Arrangements

The first three sections adopted a similar three-part structure:

- Agenda – including which and how many issues should be discussed
- Stakeholder Participation – how different groups could be engaged
- Institutional Mechanisms – what organisational tools to use

Section four presented a few options regarding how “other” institutions, both inside and outside the United Nations, might relate to the CSD.

Ranked Preferences

Each section outlined a series of options regarding the CSD with tick boxes for respondents to indicate their preferences. For almost all the options respondents were required to give a ranked response, classifying the degree of preference for a particular option on a scale of 1–5:

- 1 = Definitely agree
- 2 = Agree
- 3 = No opinion
- 4 = Disagree
- 5 = Definitely disagree

Statistical Significance

For those sections of the survey where more than one option was supplied for a particular theme the Chi-squared test was applied. This test was used in order to assess the statistical significance between different preferences, as indicated by the frequency of respondents for a given option and scale of preference. The test assumed a null hypothesis that a given set of options would be equally preferred (or equally disliked) by all respondents.

Sections with a single option have been examined in terms of the highest frequency regarding the degree of preference for the option i.e. if the highest frequency of respondents “*definitely disagreed*” with an option then that would be indicated in the results.

Note: The original question numbers are also incorporated into the results paper so that readers can check the text of the original questions. For example (A.1) = is question 1 from section A of the survey.

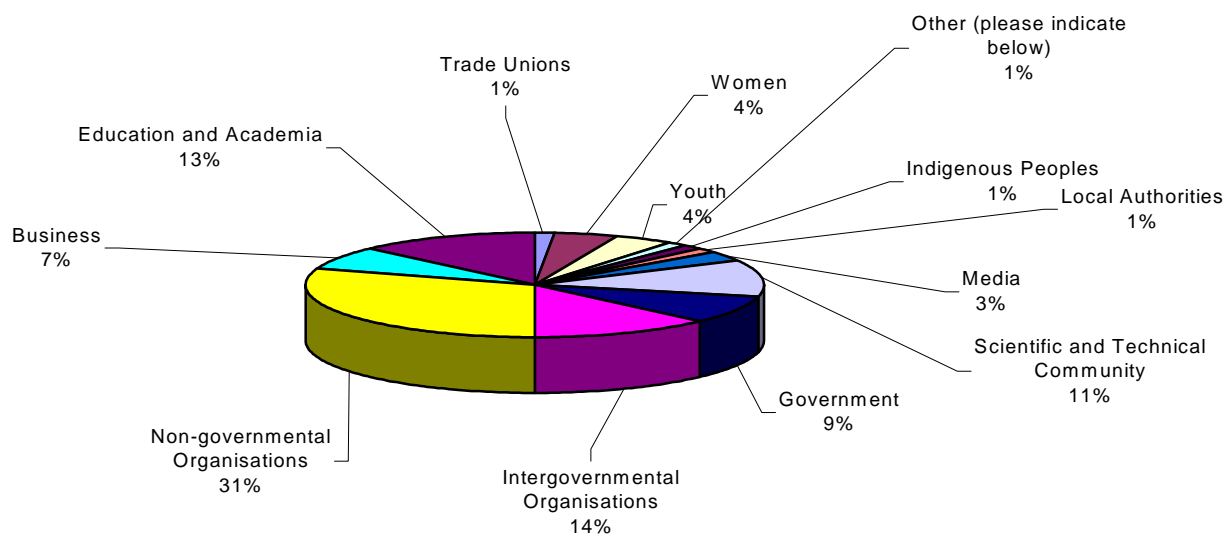


SURVEY RESULTS

General results

Responses were received from a broad range of organisations, as detailed in Box 1. The largest proportion of responses came from Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), with good representation from Inter-Governmental Organisations, Scientific and Technical community, and Education and Academia. There were no responses from Faith Communities or Farmers, and low response rates from Trade Unions, Local Authorities and Indigenous Peoples. A total of 70 organisations responded. A significant factor that may have contributed to the number and range of responses was that the principle mechanism for outreach was through email and e-networks. This mode of outreach was principally selected because of the short timeframe of the project and limited resources. Box 2 indicates the proportion of responses that were received from different regions. The high proportion of responses from Europe and North America is again a likely outcome due to the mode of outreach used for the questionnaire.

Box. 1 Proportion of Stakeholder Respondents



AGENDA

There was a clear consensus from all respondents that the CSD should focus on policy discussions and facilitation of implementation activities as SEPARATE processes during the proposed CSD biennial process. Monitoring was recognised as an important component for both policy and implementation activities.

Policy - In terms of policy discussions the greatest preference was indicated for focused discussions regarding global issues, i.e. separate from implementation and monitoring – 66% of people selected this option (A.1) and 41% *definitely agreed* with the proposal. The difference in preferences between each option (A.1 to A.4) was shown to be statistically significant according to the Chi-Squared test.

Comments - Not all people wanted to see any further policy debate in the CSD, and were clear that it should be getting on with implementation and review, "There are some new issues that require more policy discussion but in most cases we have policy clarity and the focus should be on monitoring and implementation". However, the majority indicated in the survey that policy discussion continued to be an important component of the process. As one put it " [Policy discussions] make countries more accountable".

Implementation - In terms of implementation activities, respondents similarly indicated the need for focused implementation processes – 67% of people preferred option B.1, and 44% *definitely agreed* with it. The pattern of different preferences for the options (B.1 – B.4) was also statistically significant.

Monitoring – The largest proportion of respondents indicated that they *definitely agreed* that the CSD should carry out monitoring of BOTH policy (77% of respondents) and implementation (76% of respondents) processes at the GLOBAL level (C.1).

Comments – Whilst most supported the need for monitoring, “We need accountability”, some requested monitoring to be limited, “Obviously the CSD can’t monitor all partnerships - maybe only the ones to come out of the Summit - they will need substantial resources to do this”. Another noted “I am not sure how realistic it is to expect CSD to monitor at the regional and national levels - if there were regional offices then maybe. Global progress monitoring would mean having to look at regional and national levels as well, but it would have to be in less detail if the CSD remains solely based in New York”. However, others were more in favour of national review, “the national reporting system should continue and be improved”...“Policy, for monitoring global and regional progress national progress reports is required”...and to support this “National CSD’s should be established in all countries”.

Regarding monitoring the implementation of the MDGs one respondent pointed out, “UNDP has been given the task to monitor implementation of the MGD’s. We see no need for double monitoring (both UNDP and the CSD), but we believe that the CSD should discuss issues related to implementation of relevant MGD’s.” Another recommended the CSD should, “develop indicators for monitoring policy and implementation at each level”.

Issues - The general preference for which issues the CSD should focus on regarding policy discussions, implementation and monitoring was fairly clear – that it should predominately address Agenda 21, CSD and Johannesburg commitments, as opposed to areas such as the WEHAB agenda (water, energy, health, agriculture and biodiversity) or just the Johannesburg targets - see Box 3.

Comments - Regarding specific comments on the issues to be addressed by the CSD, most were clear that it should focus on a few key issues, especially around Agenda 21, CSD and Johannesburg commitments. “Broad policy discussions are better placed in ECOSOC, UNEP, GC/GMEF, etc”. Some felt that certain issues were more suitable for being addressed by the CSD. However discussion on other topics should also take place to take into account the interlinkages. “CSD is the only intergovernmental forum for the energy and water issues. The other issues have intergovernmental forums of their own. Yet, they should still be discussed also by the CSD, in the broader context of their contribution to sustainable development”. Similarly with the WEHAB issues, “yes, as regards water and energy which have no intergovernmental forum of their own. For the other three issues, a careful definition of the specificity of the CSD discussions is required”.

In line with the wider survey there was consensus around the Millennium Development Goals. Whilst important the MDGs should only be discussed where relevant to sustainable development - “CSD policy discussions should address MDG’s but perhaps only those related to the WSSD Plan of Implementation”... “yes [the CSD should address the MDGs], but not as specific items on the agenda, rather the relationships between sustainable development goals and MDGs”...“I am not sure that the CSD implementation agenda should focus on the millennium development goals. There are other more important fora.”

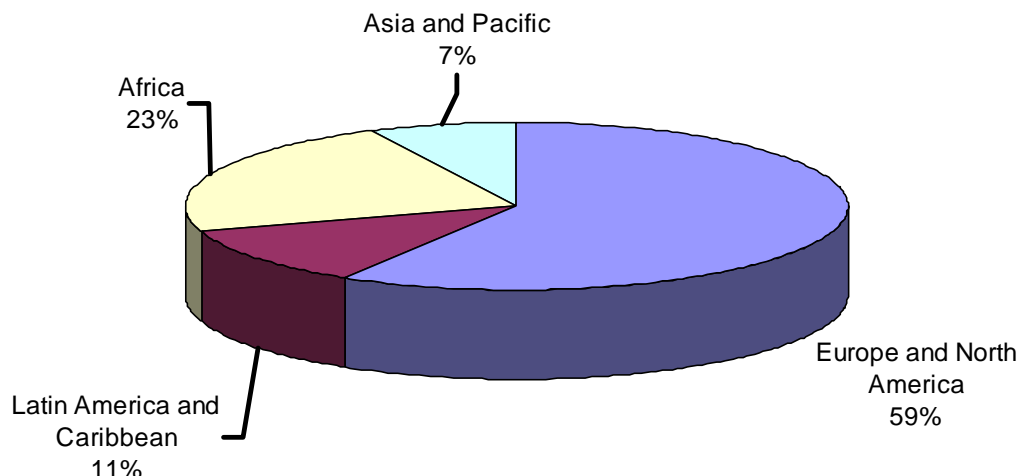
Policy - In terms of which policy issues the CSD should address, there was a clear preference for it to focus on *Agenda 21, CSD and Johannesburg follow-up* (A.5) – 66% of respondents *definitely agreed* with this option. The difference in preference between various options (A.5-A.9) was found to be statistically significant.

Implementation – Regarding the issues of interest for implementation, there was a similar outcome. The largest group of respondents (59%) *definitely agreed* that CSD work on implementation should focus on *Agenda 21, CSD and Johannesburg follow-up* (B.5). This section was not statistically significant but indicates a similar trend to the preferences on issues for policy discussion.

Comments – One respondent was clear about role the CSD should take for implementation processes, “The CSD implementation agenda should be limited to guidance and facilitation”... A strong point was made by one respondent regarding consistency of issues addressed over a two-year cycle “The implementation topics should probably be the same that have been debated as policy issues one or two years earlier? Within 10 years a rotation would somehow focus of all five WEHAB issues, as an example”.

Monitoring - Unsurprisingly, the monitoring section shows the same preferences for focusing monitoring on *Agenda 21, CSD and Johannesburg follow-up*, 46% of total respondents *definitely agreed* with this option (C.4). The number of respondents had dropped off by this section of the survey and there was no statistical significant relationship found between the various options and stakeholder preferences. However, again the preference matches the results for policy discussion and implementation.

Box 2. Proportional of Regional Responses



Number of Topics

The large majority of respondents indicated that over the two-year cycle they would like the CSD to cover TWO to THREE policy topics and THREE implementation topics over the biennial period.

Policy - Two or three topics were preferred as the scope of the CSD policy agenda over the two-year cycle. 87% of those surveyed responded to this question from which there was an equal preference for two (24%) and three (24%) topics being addressed over the two years (A.10).

Implementation - In terms of the number of issues to be addressed by implementation processes (B.10) a majority of people preferred the CSD to cover three issues (27%).

Comments –Those that commented also wanted a limited number of issues to be addressed, “More than 2 will simply dilute the quality of contribution”. However this was not the case for everyone “I think it is important that the CSD stresses the process and implementation on Agenda 21. If you limit your work to 5 or 6 items you lose your overview and coherent vision.”

Cross-Cutting Issues

Policy - 36% of respondents *agreed* and 36% *definitely agreed* (i.e. 72%) that they would like cross-cutting policy issues to be addressed “through the lens of sectoral topics” (A.11).

Comments - Whilst the majority of comments supported crosscutting issues being addressed through thematic topics, others felt that “they should be addressed in their own right”, that “Cross-cutting issues should also be discussed generally”. Some indicated other issues that they felt should be mainstreamed as cross-cutting topics, e.g. “Integrate gender and health into all topics”.

Consultation On Issue Focus

Policy - In terms of whether there should be prior consultation regarding the specific focus of a particular policy discussion, a majority of 51% of respondents *definitely agreed* that this was a necessary step (A.12).

Stakeholder Participation

In terms of policy discussion stakeholders generally agreed with the need for greater participation throughout the CSD, and indicated a particular preference for the proposal of holding joint ministerial and stakeholder roundtables. For participation in implementation processes the most popular preference was for the CSD to promote good practice in partnerships and initiatives. Along the same lines as policy discussion, a larger

group of respondents selected the option of holding joint reviews by stakeholders and governments in order to monitor progress. A majority of respondents also agreed that the CSD should encourage COMMON PRINCIPLES for stakeholder participation at all levels, and that all stakeholder processes should use SKILLED FACILITATORS.

Policy - In general the highest percentage of respondents indicated they *definitely agreed* with the need for greater stakeholder engagement in policy discussions according to each of the options proposed in the survey (A.13-A.17). The degree of support for each of the participation options is indicated below:

- Joint ministerial and stakeholder roundtables (66% of respondents definitely agreed)
- Stakeholder participation in plenary discussions (65%)
- “Non-parallel” stakeholder dialogues and high-level discussions – i.e. to take place on separate occasions (50%)
- High-level negotiations including stakeholder engagement (55%)
- Stakeholder access to “informals” and “informal informals” (43%)

The option of holding joint stakeholder and ministerial roundtables was the most popular option (A.13), both in terms of the total number of people who responded to the question compared to the other options (96% of total respondents), as well as the proportion of people who *definitely agreed* with the proposal (as indicated above). The distribution of preferences is statistically significant.

Comments – Those that made comments clearly supported the proposal for joint government and stakeholder commissions. Other respondents offered their own ideas for working group mechanisms, “CSD should set up seven working groups to review policies, monitoring and implementation of the WEHAB + 2 areas and the 29 targets. CSD Secretariat and UN agencies, including regional commissions, would provide technical support and organize / schedule meetings, as part of a well-coordinated program”. Regarding access to informals, a few people argued that governments will always need to have closed discussions on difficult issues - “Access to large informals, i.e. ability to attend and limited ability to participate might be possible but I can’t see how differences between countries can be overcome in small informal meetings if non-governmental actors are present.” ...“if there are sticky issues I have full understanding for governments excluding stakeholders” ...“While we feel that access to negotiations, to decision makers and to information on the process is very important to stakeholders, there is a concern that if stakeholders gained access to informal informals it would lead to the establishment of yet another layer of informal, informal, informals. We wonder if we should accept the governments right to an own sphere, just like the stakeholders might want to have their own closed meeting? Assuming that there is proper access to other meetings/ negotiations”.

A more innovative proposal came from one respondent, “The CSD should establish a task manager system for partnerships”. In terms of holding parallel reviews, one respondent stated, “I think that the first suggestion would lead to a lot of bureaucracy and confusion and often it just wouldn’t happen”. Another suggested, “The CSD should welcome and take note of such reports but not take a role in actively encouraging their development. Stakeholders should do that on their own initiative”

Implementation - The most popular preference was for the CSD to promote good practice in partnerships and initiatives (B.11), followed by the idea of providing exchange opportunities (B.13). The difference in preferences between options was statistically significant. The proportion of respondents that *definitely agreed* with each option for stakeholder participation was as follows:

- Promotion of good practice (60% *definitely agreed*)
- Provision of opportunities for exchange of experiences (51%)
- Monitoring partnerships and initiatives (31%)
- Initiation and replication of partnerships (34%)

Monitoring - In terms of stakeholder involvement in monitoring processes, a greater total number of respondents selected the option of holding JOINT reviews by stakeholders and governments to monitor progress, 71% respondents selected this option (C.10), as compared to 66% for the option of holding parallel reviews (C.9). A majority of 48% *definitely agreed* with the joint monitoring proposal.

Comments - One commented that the basis for monitoring of partnerships should be “in line with SD principals, and basic principals such as transparency, accountability etc.”

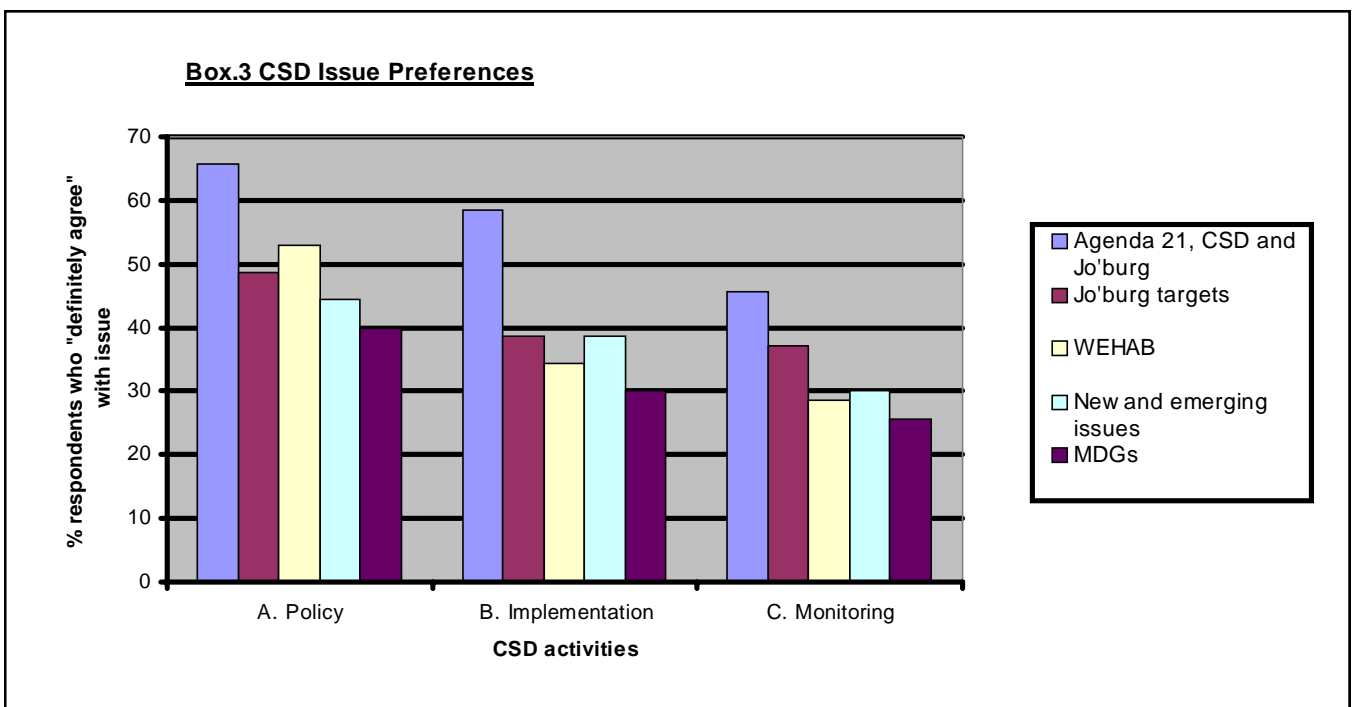
Principles – 60% *definitely agreed* that the CSD should encourage COMMON PRINCIPLES for stakeholder participation at all levels (local to global) (D.10).

Facilitation – 40% *agreed* and 30% *definitely agreed* that all stakeholder processes should use SKILLED FACILITATORS (D.11)

Comments - People had quite a bit to say about principles of effective participation... "There needs to be a framework for partnerships before they continue to be part of the CSD and WSSD implementation plans". In terms of ensuring a fair process - "Stakeholders must be treated as equal partners", as well as enabling effective and accountable representation within stakeholder groups "Stakeholders have to be happy with the people who are representing them in the different fora. In several cases stakeholders from sectoral groups are unhappy with their representation - this is a important matter to be addressed". In addition, "Stakeholders should get enough time to present their view points. "

Resources – A small majority of respondents (29%) *definitely agreed* that resources (financial, training etc) for participation should be a MANDATORY contribution from CSD member countries (D.13). However, respondents were fairly inclusive in this preference and the relationship was not found to be statistically significant.

Comments - A number of respondents felt that more could be done to assist participation. Particular emphasis was put on governments to take this on - "WSSD put a tremendous amount of responsibility on partnerships to assist with achieving sustainable development objectives. CSD member governments are responsible for ensuring that these partnerships have the capability to succeed - either by providing direct assistance or supporting efforts focused on building capacity within partnerships." Another pointed out the need build up "private sector interest in many of these discussions. They tend to stay aloof yet their involvement is crucial"



INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Issue-Focused Commissions

The majority of respondents preferred the option of convening JOINT Government and Stakeholder commissions in both policy discussions and monitoring processes.

Policy - There is a statistically significant preference from the respondents that the CSD should convene issue-focused commissions, involving BOTH governments and stakeholders, rather than governments alone. 47% of respondents *definitely agreed* with the combined (government and stakeholder) commissions (A.18), as opposed to 21% who opted for the intergovernmental panel approach (A.19).

Monitoring - Similar to the policy discussion 36% of respondents *definitely agreed* and 34% *agreed* that the CSD should convene monitoring commission involving both governments and stakeholders (C.11).

Comments – Most respondents were clear in their support “these should be ad-hoc task forces which work very flexibly and cost efficient.”...“a very good idea.”

Implementation Workshops / Forums

Implementation - Both options for convening international workshops (B.15) and regional and sub-regional workshops (B.16) were popular to support implementation processes. 50% of respondents *definitely agreed* with international workshops, 43% *definitely agreed* with regional workshops. The proposal for work exchanges was less popular but a majority of 36% respondents still *definitely agreed* with the option.

Comments - Not all were in favor with these options, “There are many conferences to attend internationally on issues regarding sustainable development. These are often at the micro-level i.e. tourism, urbanism, water etc. however they all inevitably have top people discussing emerging issues in sustainable development related to the conference context. I do not think more conferences are needed”. Others supported it but recognised this would need additional resources “In the year without a CSD policy making session rich countries should be encouraged to support financially such meetings that, however, should not all take place in developed countries only.”

Venue

Policy - In terms of the proposal of convening CSD policy discussion in the margins of relevant Agenda 21 task manager processes, 43% of respondents *definitely agreed* with the idea (A.22). See Box 4.

Comments - Those who commented also supported this approach, “More discussions should indeed take place in the policy making bodies of other organizations. However the CSD must also continue to discuss these issues and these relationships.” Instead of moving the formal CSD sessions one respondent preferred to move the thematic taskforces or commissions to different venues, “It would be better for time-bound commissions on specific, relevant issues to convene discussions on the margins of other bodies”.

Resources

There was a general preference from respondents that policy, implementation and monitoring processes facilitated by the CSD should be supported by sufficient government and intergovernmental funds, as opposed to support from stakeholder funds.

Policy - The largest proportion of respondents supported the option of the CSD taking an active role in identifying funds from government sources in order to carry out policy recommendations – 43% *definitely agreed* with this proposal (A.23), as opposed to 34% of people who agreed with the option for stakeholder financial support (A.24). The relationship was statistically significant.

Comments - Regarding the identification of funds, it was clear that many felt that the CSD should take a more active role, “the CSD should, for each case, make a strong recommendation to the highest governing body in other institutions (not to the executive head of an institution only as his or her hands are bound) to allocate the necessary funds under the regular budget of this institution”. Many liked the idea of the majority of funds coming from governments but as one commented, “It would certainly strengthen our position if we could say that we are not coming to the negotiation table empty handed”. Numerous problems related to funding (or the lack of it) were noted “It is the responsibility of governments/ intergovernmental organizations to create new funds and/or shift existing funds (e.g. from military expenditure) to carry up the recommendation. This issue may be a stumbling block”.

Implementation - Similar to policy resources, the majority of respondents (53%) *definitely agreed* with the option that implementation processes should be supported by governmental funds (B.20). The relationship was statistically significant.

Comments - In terms of supporting implementation some comments expressed uncertainty over of financial responsibilities, "I am not sure if the CSD could undertake all "support" as required. It may be necessary to select areas/issues/countries to support therefore some criteria might apply." Whilst others specified particular groups that need support, "[the CSD] should help the grass root organizations"

Monitoring – A majority of respondents *definitely agreed* (38%) or *agreed* (23%) that governments and intergovernmental funds should be provided to enable adequate monitoring (C.14).

Government Attendance

In general respondents seemed to support the need for both attendance and coordination of relevant government departments for CSD policy discussions and implementation processes.

Policy - 61% of respondents *definitely agreed* with the option (A.26) that governments should fully coordinate their policy position with the relevant ministries and departments. This was compared to 46% who *definitely agreed* with the option to ensure that relevant ministries and departments attend the CSD policy sessions (A.25). However this relationship was not statically significant, suggesting that in general respondents were fairly ambivalent between the two options.

Comments - On ministerial coordination, specific comments backed up the general results "there definitely needs to be more communication within governments to identify expertise needed to negotiate and take positions". Another stated there should be "no more CSD meetings that only environmental ministers attend or are aware of." Regarding the question "which ministries are relevant?" one pointed out that "in order to strengthen coherence and commitment it is important to include/involve as many as possible". Related to this another suggested that "Gender or women's health and finance ministries are actually relevant to all meetings and issues". Another respondent agreed with the proposals but noted, "many, if not most, of them lack funds" and therefore government departments would require additional support to coordinate more effectively.

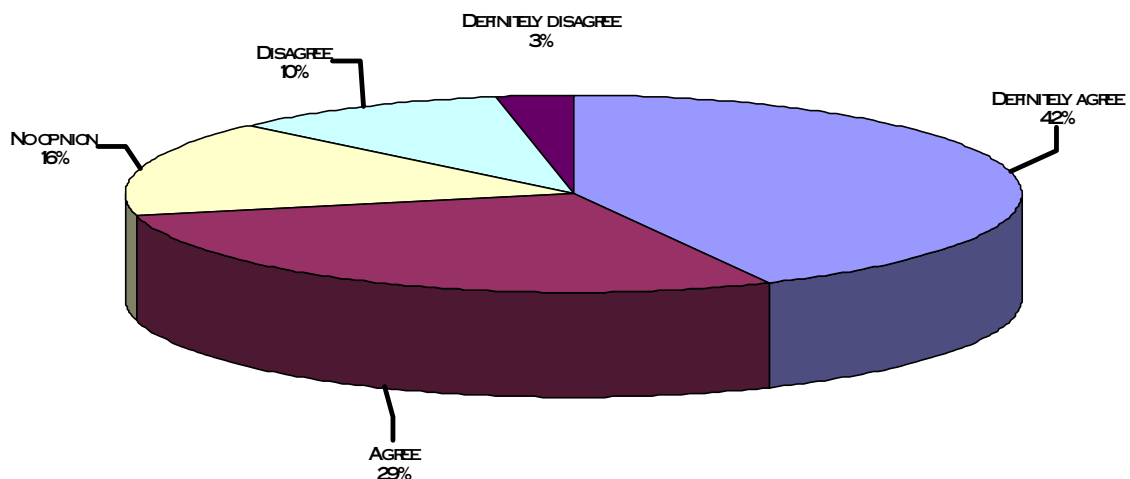
Implementation - Similar to policy, 59% of respondents *definitely agreed* that governments should coordinate across departments for implementation processes (B.19). This relationship was also not statically significant.

Independent Review

Monitoring - On the option of using independent, non-governmental review bodies to monitor implementation and policy progress (C.13), 31% *agreed* and 30% *definitely agreed* with the proposal

Comments - Whilst most people clearly support this proposal, "Monitoring is essential and legitimate. Sanctions could also be contemplated"..."this could be useful for very specific topics or bodies", not all were totally in agreement "No one can truly be independent. It is better to have the different arguments and tensions out in the open so that they can be resolved."

Box. 4 CSD Policy Discussions in Alternative Venues (Option A.22)



General CSD Preferences

CSD Membership - 53% of respondents *definitely agreed* that the CSD should have universal government membership. 26% agreed, 13% had no opinion, 6% disagreed and 3% definitely disagreed (A.20).

Comments - Not all supported the common view that the CSD would improve with universal government membership, "I think the present system works OK. Non-members can participate. Otherwise the decision making process would become more cumbersome."

CSD Bureau - 36% of respondents agreed that the Bureau should be elected for the duration of the two-year cycle, 34% *definitely agreed* with the proposal, 24% had *no opinion* and 4% *disagreed* (A.21).



OTHER INSTITUTIONAL PROPOSALS

United Nations

The proposals for re-establishing the Interagency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD); linking the General Assembly's Second and Third Committees; and replacing the current UN Trusteeship Council with a Sustainable Development Council were all supported by the majority of respondents.

IACSD - 31% of respondents *definitely agreed*, 20% *agreed*, and 27% had *no opinion* about whether the IACSD should be re-established (D.1).

Comments - Not all were in favor of this option "More information is needed on how the UN is functioning without the IACSD before recommending it should be re-established". Some had no awareness of its existence "never heard of the IACSD"... "I don't know enough about the IACSD to comment - probably yes if it is needed".

General Assembly – 31% of respondents *definitely agreed*, 21% *agreed*, and 30% had *no opinion* about combining the Second and Third Committees of the GA (D.2)

Comments - Not all groups felt that the GA was ready for this proposal, it "has had little impact on CSD outcomes and one would suggest the combining of the Second and Third committees if one wanted ECOSOC to play a more active coordinating role, for which a convincing case has yet to be made". Others made suggestions for the process, "I suggest to start with regular joint meetings on linkages". One went even further than the proposal, calling for "A single committee on sustainable development, including social aspects may be recommended. "

Sustainable Development Council – Regarding whether a sustainable development council should be established to replace the current UN Trusteeship Council, promoting SD centrally within the UN (D.3), 36% *definitely agreed*, 14% *agreed*, and 23% had *no opinion*.

Comments - A few respondents did not see the value of this option, "I am not sure that re-naming institutions or new ones is better. Maybe just adding a mandate to an existing body is enough"... "The promotion of Sustainable Development as a Central goal within the UN should be part of the CSD mandate without having to create a new body to achieve this"... "I don't see any political will at this stage. Consequently, it does not seem worth it to invest a lot of energy in support of such a proposal at present". Others felt the idea needed further development, "If the new council was established its relationship with ECOSOC would have to be clarified as would its links to other UN bodies including the CSD"... "Interesting idea to be further explored". Finally a few made their own suggestions, "This would overlap too much with ECOSOC. Better to create a Council to manage the Global Commons"... "You should consider a University Research Center to promote SD"

Non-UN International Institutions

Respondents had a greater preference for the involvement of the World Bank, IMF and World Trade Organisation in the follow-up to Johannesburg. The majority *definitely agreed* that these institutions should have to report their activities to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

World Bank and International Monetary Fund - In terms of the option of World Bank and IMF reporting to ECOSOC (D.4) 57% of respondents *definitely agreed*, 17% *agreed*, and 9% had *no opinion*.

Comments - Many respondents were very positive about this option, "Strongly agree...The IMF/WBG should be held responsible when it comes to sustainable development"... "This should have happened a long time ago. They should also report to other stakeholders like host countries and their population". Some offered a more nuanced approach, "The World Bank and the IMF should be encouraged to voluntarily report. Such reporting should not be seen as a way of subjecting them to the UN control but of them contributing to international coherence on SD"... "In order for this reporting to be effective, ECOSOC would have to have some teeth to make sure these bodies do implement what is required."

World Trade Organisation – Regarding the option of WTO reporting to ECOSOC (D.5) 56% of respondents *definitely agreed*, 21% *agreed*, 9% had *no opinion*.

Comments - Many respondents were also keen on this option, "Like the World Bank and the IMF, the WTO should be encouraged to voluntarily report so that there can be greater coherence on SD implementation". Some saw this as an opportunity for the CSD to clarify the balance of institutional arrangements, "It should also be made clear that the WTO cannot supersede multilateral Environmental Agreements". Taking these ideas a step further one respondent suggested, "The WTO has become a UN institution, and thus under control of the UN."

Regional Bodies

UN Regional Commissions and UNEP Regional Offices - A majority of respondents (42%) *definitely agreed* with JOINT facilitation by the UN Regional Economic Commissions and UNEP Regional Offices for regional policy, implementation and monitoring processes (D.8). This relationship was statically significant.

National Bodies

National to Local institutions - 46% of respondents *definitely agreed* that national, regional and local sustainable development commissions (or councils) required additional financial support from governments and intergovernmental bodies (D.9).

Comments – A telling comment was made by one local government representative, "I have 15 years of input to a local government (Ottawa, Canada) without hearing of CSD"



CONCLUSION

The vast majority of respondents clearly support the need for substantive changes in the UN Commission on Sustainable Development. Many of the options included in the survey are fairly basic and do not go into any great depth about how the proposals would work in practice. However a large proportion of the results are very much in line with the Secretary General's report on "*Follow up to Johannesburg and the Future Role of the CSD – The Implementation Track*" (E/CN.17/2003/2). Not all aspects were the total in agreement with the SG's report however. In relation to this the following key points are based on the results of the survey:

- *National level activities* - Financial resources, capacity building and technical support should be sought to support the establishment of sustainable development councils (or committees) at the local to national level;
- *Regional level* – Regional Commissions should act jointly with the UNEP regional offices to coordinate regional processes;
- *International level* – The World Bank, International Monetary Fund and World Trade Organisation should regularly report on their sustainable development activities to ECOSOC. In terms of UN coherence, the Interagency Committee on Sustainable Development should be re-established. The General Assembly should consider combining the Second and Third Committees. In addition, the UN Trusteeship Council should consider adopting Sustainable Development as its overarching goal and new title for the council;
- Issue focus - The CSD should follow-up not only the Johannesburg commitments, but also the CSD and Agenda 21 agreements. The CSD should address the MDGs where relevant to the Johannesburg commitments and targets;
- Number of issues - The CSD should focus on two – three issues over each two year cycle
- Expert policy forums – Although given a different title in the survey there was clear support for "Issue-focused commissions" or task forces, which include government and major groups representatives. The commissions should address policy and monitor progress regarding "issues that lack consensus and new / emerging issues".
- Implementation forums – Again there was wide support for convening implementation forums or workshops at international, regional and sub-regional levels. An additional option, not referred to in the SG's report, supported setting up exchange programmes.
- Further suggestions for organisational arrangements included:
 - Making the membership of CSD universal;
 - Establishing a bureau that lasted the duration of each two-year cycle;
 - Organising CSD Forums or task forces in the margins of meetings held by the UN Task Managers;
- Ministerial involvement – Ministers and government departments should coordinate and attend relevant CSD policy and implementation processes;
- Major Groups – Wider major group participation is needed in policy, implementation and monitoring processes. This includes:
 - Policy processes - Joint ministerial and stakeholder roundtables and participation in plenaries;
 - Implementation processes - Promoting good practice and establishing opportunities for exchange of experience;
 - Monitoring – Establishing joint government / major group commissions and independent review groups;
 - There should be common principles of stakeholder participation at all levels;

- Skilled facilitators should be used in all participatory processes;
- The necessary resources should be provided, with facilitation from the CSD, to ensure effective and equitable engagement.

A fundamental point was made by one respondent. They indicated that, whilst it is good to look at the mechanisms for enhancing the CSD and for effective Johannesburg follow-up, if we do not address a continuing lack of political commitment then we cannot expect to see real progress on the ground. Another respondent pointed out that to make real progress in terms of policy and implementation it would be important to “*examine first of all the failures of realizing Agenda 21, and this in the context as to why Agenda 21 was silenced at the World Summit in Johannesburg*”. Another said that broad political recognition and a joint willingness to take forward the values and common goals of sustainable development are essential.

As people gather in New York to focus on establishing effective mechanisms for implementing the Johannesburg commitments, all groups - governments, intergovernmental institutions and major groups - will need to remember why sustainable development is so important. We need to use this vital concept to focus all our efforts on turning the goals and commitments made over the last ten years into a genuine process of implementation.



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For copies of the responses and a sample of the original survey please look online at:

<http://www.earthsummit2002.org>

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