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Network ~ 2002

Preparing for Earth Summit 2002

LDC III A balancing act?

The third Least Developed Countries conference in Brussels from May 14 to May 20 was about governance as much as about anything else. Jan Gustav Strandenaes reports.

Success!

“This is all new. We are not talking only of a few commodities. We are talking about all products this time and improved possibilities for market access for the Least Developed Countries. And the transition periods – great progress. Of course, all this has to be finalized and made official. But we feel

we have made a break through”. The negotiators having finished work in the first cluster on time Saturday evening, felt they had reasons to feel jubilant.

The second cluster however, worked on behind closed doors into the evening, totally oblivious to the jazz marathon going on in Brussels at the same time. But then again, the citizens of Brussels, frolicking in mellow and daring jazz harmonies, were equally oblivious to the UN efforts in their own city, to combat global poverty.

No success

As always, professional negotiators had a tendency to declare a conference a success as long as they had a consensus document. The participating NGOs were far more sceptical. “Discarding all custom duty on products from LDC countries is no real sacrifice for the rich world,” a seasoned NGO delegate said. “The export products from the LDC countries have never ever been a threat to the richer countries in the world. The value of custom revenue from LDCs has been almost zero. Thus what the rich world has granted the LDCs is tantamount to zero. I see no reason to be elated over zero progress.”

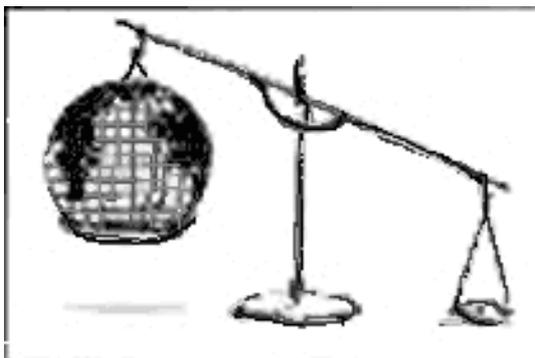
Some success

Nonetheless, there was notably progress in

some areas. The EU, New Zealand and Norway adopted the “Everything but Arms Initiative”(EBAI) providing for full access for LDC products to their markets, although the EU has a longer implementation period than the others. Japan and the USA was not as forthcoming, and yielded little in the end. Negotiators felt that there had been notable progress in relation to the debt question, though NGOs from the LDC countries felt they were given no new promises. The conference reached agreement on the environmental language. Without doubt, quite quickly, noted an environment NGO, pointing to the fact that the text on that area was uncontroversial, and represented nothing but a listing of minimum requirements.

Broken promises

The beautiful Bibliotheque Solavy, an early l’art nouveau structure, is quiet, almost deserted. Standing in its doorway, looking out, you see the building surrounded by a placid park. Your eyes rest on well groomed trees, and only the



An equitable balance?

horizon is blurred by the looming post-modernistic structure of the European parliament, looking like, some would say, a burgeoning phallic-like building pretending to be a cathedral. Shrouded in steel and glass, emanating a sensation of power, it housed the Third UN Conference on LDCs, during the third week of May. The more restrained looking Bibliotheque Solvay was the home of the NGO Forum, representing the grass roots. A few NGOs dropped by on Monday. A member

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of the NGO steering committee from one of the LDC countries, said laconically: "The third LDC in a row, the third global promise broken in a row, we go home feeling abandoned and alienated. You know", he remarked, "this conference has been as much about governance as about everything else that was officially on the agenda."

What had really happened?

"The feeling of alienation did not start on Monday. Even long before the conference started, NGOs began experiencing problems with access," he said. "It was the old game of who is and who is not given accreditation. Even though the system people from the UN secretariat here feign ignorance in this respect, claiming all NGOs have to follow the rules of the game, that is actually when the feeling of abandonment started. Access to information is important, and controlling this access is tantamount to extreme political control. I could go on and list a number of small incidents to you, each one of them insignificant in size and scope, but together they represent an almost insurmountable problem for NGOs coming from the LDC countries. Even the hard working and highly supportive NGO Forum office we had, did not always manage to tackle the adversarial forces found in the international system".

See-through transparency

The NGO Forum which convened on Thursday May 3rd, 4 days prior to the conference, had managed to infuse a sense of hope and optimism in people before the official negotiations would start. Despite that NGOs, approached the official conference with some apprehension. And they got all their suspicions confirmed. The creation of the Belgian wall, an iron fence in the park, making access to the EU parliament difficult but not impossible, angered people more than any of the official delegates will ever understand. The veteran NGO looked over a few early reports and said: "After the Belgian Wall came the closing of the drafting sessions. Everything took on the normal procedure of negotiating the destiny of our peoples in secrecy. This is really adding insult to injury. We expect a UN conference to adhere to the principles of good governance as expressed in the conventions on Human Rights. Instead we have experienced that this conference through international governance, has negated basic principles of participation, transparency and accountability.

This conference acquired a high level of see-through transparency with a low level of interactive and participatory practices. But if an increase in number is progress, we got that," he added sardonically.

"In 1971 when the world started to combat the phenomenon of the Least Developed Countries, they numbered 25 countries. Today, 30 years later, the number of extremely poor nations stands at a total of 49."

It was all about governance

At the outset, this conference was basically about improved development for all. But through a number of manoeuvres, it also became a conference and a testing ground for the UN on good governance.

A lot of work needs to be done, to make governance matter where it is supposed to matter – for people. The UN cannot do this without the NGOs.

Conference report available at:

www.un.org/events/ldc3/conference/

Editorial

Meetings, meetings everywhere! Following hard on the heels of CSD 10 - Prep. Comm. I, we have a brace of related meetings around the globe. Our diary dates on page 10 shows just how busy June will be for the Earth Summit process. More of that later.

Going back to the 1st Prep. Comm. early in May, governments broadly agreed on the modalities for the Summit at this, organisational, session. Welcome inclusions include the role of Stakeholders in the preparations for the Summit, and at the event itself, and the importance of other related parallel processes on the international agenda.

Also notable was the strength and unity in the interventions made by Stakeholders. In response we have invited representatives of some of the Major Groups who presented to the session to offer their views on the key outcomes of the Prep. Comm. To add a little extra flavour the stakeholders are joined by comments from the South African and Canadian Governments, offering Southern & Northern perspectives to the debate.

Whilst it seems that the CSD 9/10 marathon only ended yesterday, there is no let up in the agenda. At the regional level its full steam ahead with numerous sub-regional meetings planned for June and July. Before it all gets too much, Network reviews this invigorated preparatory process in advance on the regional Prep. Comms. taking place this Autumn. While there may seem like there's never enough hours in the day, there can be no criticism of a lack of energy in the process

One of the main challenges for the Summit in 2002 will be to become a focal point for other international processes running parallel to the Sustainable Development agenda. Perhaps biggest of these challenges are the other Global Summit's. Upcoming we have the 5 year review of the Habitat II agenda, addressing the Urban environment. Dealing with a wealth of issues central to sustainability, Istanbul +5, as it is known, should be avid viewing for all those with an eye set of Johannesburg. We preview the event on Page 6.

Similarly, as you may have already read, we have the 3rd Least Developed Countries Conference. In his own unique style, regular contributor Jan Gustav gives his view on the mixed bag of outcomes. Nevertheless, for the Earth Summit in 2002, the issues LDC III embraced on are vital in terms of the integrated nature of Sustainable Development. Regardless of measuring the success of this event, perhaps of more importance is what action will be taken between now and September 2002 on those decisions that were made.

Forests are coming back on the agenda with the first substantive meeting of the new UN Forum on Forests taking place later this month. Here we find another key global process firmly setting its sights on the Earth Summit. The secretariat brings us all back up to speed on this Forests process on page 8.

Finally, I would like to apologise to readers for the paucity of pictures in this issue. In order to sustain coverage of a broad number of issues, we have had to reduce our consumption of glossy images. On the bright side your printers may all be sighing in collective relief.

T. Middleton

Editor

News, News, News

OECD Ministerial Meetings: Mixing Economies with Environments

Finance, Trade, Foreign Affairs and Environment Ministers met in Paris earlier this month for the OECD Ministerial Meeting. A wide reaching agenda saw Minister's from different departments working together to improve policy co-ordination between OECD governments on a range of environment and economic issues.

Building on previous high-level debate at recent IMF-World Bank meetings, the delegates reviewed prospects for the world economy in the face of a slowdown in the US and Europe and continued recession in Japan. Parallel to this, other specialised Ministers met to consider the usefulness of targets for sustainable development as well as how best to tackle the twin challenges of safeguarding the environment whilst ensuring adequate and affordable energy supply. Finally, there was also general discussion on trade issues for both OECD and non-OECD countries within the context of a new round of trade talks.

Alongside the Ministerial meetings public interests were hosted at the OECD Forum. Here government representatives met with business, academia and civil society to gauge broader consensus on the issues being debated by Ministers.

The key outcome of the meeting was a Ministerial Communiqué, titled 'Towards a Sustainable Future'. In the section concerning integrating sustainable development, Ministers reiterated their commitment to the Earth Summit process stating '*real progress must be made*', and committing to have '*sustainable development strategies in place in all our countries by the time of the Summit*'.

Further to this Ministers called on the OECD's Roundtable on Sustainable Development to strengthen its role as a forum for international dialogue among stakeholders. This last point reinforces the importance which is increasingly being placed by governments on stakeholder involvement in the preparations for the Summit.

Within its focus on Sustainable Development the document goes on to address: Market based instruments; Responses to climate change; Managing natural resources; Strengthening decision-making and Linkages with the global economy. A progress report on the OECD's work in these fields, with a particular focus on sustainable development indicators, will be made at the Summit in 2002.

A full copy of the report can be found at:

www.oecd.org/media/release/nw01-48a.htm

Governments commit to cut hazardous chemicals

An historic chemicals convention, which many scientists expect will deliver a healthier world for people and wildlife for the polar regions to sub-Saharan Africa, was signed this earlier this week in Stockholm by over 100 countries.

Klaus Töpfer, UNEP's Exec. Dir., under whose auspices the treaty was negotiated, stated 'It is vital that after adopting and signing the Convention governments follow-up quickly by rati-

fying the treaty so it can enter into force by 2004 at the latest'. This makes the agreement a ripe target for the 2002 Earth Summit. Fifty ratifications are required to make the agreement legally binding.

Töpfer continued, 'In the meantime, work must start right away on preparing countries to take action under the treaty. By adopting strong resolutions in Stockholm for the interim period, governments will ensure an immediate start to international action against these most dangerous of chemicals'. The agreement covers a dozen persistent organic pollutants (POPs) including pesticides, industrial chemicals and hazardous by-products of combustion.

One of the most warmly received elements of this international agreement is the critical impact it will have on the health of individuals. Known to build up in the fats of Animals, the pollutants are intimately linked to human health - this has been particularly documented in the Arctic region, where POPs are passed to children through the placenta and breast milk. Shelia Watt-Cloutier, Vice President of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, stated 'Thankfully the world has had a wake-up call. Mothers of the world from the Arctic to tropical Africa, South America and Asia are united in supporting the global POPs convention.'

Adding to this Fernando Bejarno, Director of the Network for Action on Pesticides and their Alternatives in Mexico welcomed the signing, commenting

'It makes the Precautionary Principle a reality and future generations will thank governments for their foresight.'

Contact: www.unep.ch

World Environment Day 2001

This years June 5th World Environment Day takes the theme 'Connect with the World Wide Web of Life'. Events celebrating the day will draw attention to the link between mankind's development and ultimate survival with the delicate balance of the natural world.

UNEP's Exec. Dir., Klaus Topfer, stated 'This year's theme sends an important message. It reminds all of the Earth's inhabitants that mankind's future is inextricably woven with the plants, animals and ecosystems of the planet.' Underpinning this the World Resources Institute, in cooperation with the UN, will be launching a new scientific survey, titled 'The Millennium Assessment'. Bringing together and unprecedented network of scientists, experts and NGOs, the survey is an attempt to fill important gaps in humankind's knowledge of threats to the Earth.

Some of the key activities being organised include a workshop on developing guidelines covering the import and export of GMOs, under the Bio-safety Protocol. This years theme, Connect to the World Wide Web of life, is being used as a launch pad for a special telecommunications initiative. It will highlight the potential of telecommunications for solving some of the most pressing environmental issues of the new millennium.

Co-hosting the event, the city of Torino will also be launching the first biennial International Eco-efficiency Fair, including the latest state-of-the-art energy technologies and experts.

Contact: www.unep.org



Earth Summit 2002 Prep. Comm. 1

*The 1st Preparatory Committee meeting for Earth Summit 2002 met in New York from April 30th - May 3rd. While the session dealt largely with organisational issues, much interest surrounded the strength of the Major Groups positions. **Network 2002** has invited some of these stakeholders to give their views on the key outcomes, and their priorities for the road ahead. They are joined by views from the Canadian and South African Governments.*

Business

We recognize the CSD9 Chairman's suggestion of a "New Deal" as a visionary and inclusive approach to the challenges which we all face.

The Summit must address profound global issues such as poverty eradication, food security, access to clean water, HIV/AIDS, atmospheric quality, debt relief, access to all forms of finance, including foreign direct investment, the transfer of appropriate technologies, and address the cross-cutting themes in which we all have a common interest. These challenges will require the commitment of the global community, and the participation of all sectors of civil society. The question is, how can we design a structure for the Summit that will accommodate all those who have a role and ought to be consulted, and goes beyond the limitations of the planned half-day multi-stakeholder dialogue?

There is no simple answer, but we would consider the geographical segregation of major stakeholder groups into separate venues, somewhat distant from the core intergovernmental Summit, as a regressive step. It may prove difficult to enlist support from our constituents on the basis of such a model. A more modern option, which would encourage an inclusive and cooperative approach, would be to 'cluster' the issues to be addressed in the different venues, allowing the various stakeholder groups to contribute productively to the governments' deliberations.

Such a 'clustered' design would focus the agenda on the issues and not the process, increase the capacity for action-oriented decisions, enhance participation, and would ensure that the Summit lives up to our expectations.

Quoted from the intervention by Jack Whelan, ICC, representing the major group Business.

Local Government

ICLEI believes that the future success and credibility of the international sustainable development agenda depends upon the articulation and endorsement of a locally focused, bottom-up set of strategies at Earth Summit 2002.

In the Local Government presentation to the CSD, five key recommendations were made:

1. The sustainability efforts of Local Government will continue to be deeply affected by national laws, human and institutional capacities and financial frameworks. Therefore, we urge Governments to work closely with Local Government to

identify and remove barriers to local implementation.

2. Local successes are national successes! Consult actively with your local government counterparts in your national reports.
3. We encourage you to invite Local Government representatives as members of your delegations to the Earth Summit.
4. Recognizing the effective role that local governments are playing in your national contexts, we encourage your local engagement in Local Government Summit preparations.
5. We welcome the strong commitment from the CSD to work closely with the Major Groups. Local Government offer our support in setting the Summit agenda.

ICLEI is facilitating a comprehensive Local Government Preparatory Process for Earth Summit 2002 with the endorsement of the International Union of Local Authorities and the CSD Secretariat.

Sean Southey - ICLEI

Trade Unions

At Prep. Comm. 1 I announced a trade union international Prep. Comm. for next October and pledged my organisation's commitment to work with their South African affiliates to prepare for the worker and trade union involvement at Earth Summit 2002. We hope this will serve as a launch pad for a new level of workplace partnerships between workers, trade unions and business, in creating tangible implementation measures for sustainable development.

Earth Summit 2002 should provide inspiration for new training and education programmes to facilitate the development of comprehensive workplace target-setting, monitoring and implementation. Such programs should both improve production and influence personal consumption habits, so as to develop higher levels of political will about sustainable development issues.

I urge delegates to build upon the CSD multi-stakeholder model as a process to further develop at Earth Summit 2002 and beyond. A "New Deal" can only succeed if workplace measures were effectively linked to the activities of other stakeholders.

The issue of integrating the social dimension of sustainable development should rotate around "Poverty", as the 1st main theme at Earth Summit 2002 and that this should be linked to Employment and Food security, as two sub themes. Employment is the only means for people to work their way out of poverty. The issue of Food Security brought together many of the issues that are of concern to most stakeholders, like water, land & natural resource questions, as well as access, gender and equality concerns.

The 'barriers to participation' and the issue of building of partnerships should be addressed through a 2nd theme, which should focus on both Climate Change/Energy, and Public Health.

Lucien Royer, ICFTU

Women

We welcome recent broad decisions of the 1st Prep. Comm. that seek to ensure effective national and regional preparations for further implementation of *Agenda 21*. At the same time however, we take this opportunity to urge future Prep. Comms. to be more pro-active in promoting the UNCED legacy - the centrality of gender equality to sustainable development.

One immediate area of concern has been the apparent lack of

attention given to gender balance in forming the Bureau. We would also urge the Secretariat to use gender balance to guide distribution of funds for NGO participation, and to encourage gender balance in all government delegations.

WEDO's commitment to sustainable development is premised on a broad and integrated approach, one that goes beyond the ecological to include social and economic dimensions of development - specifically gender equality. In the preparation of the official document we therefore believe it is crucial for Earth Summit 2002 to build on the outcomes and achievements of UNCED *as well as* those from subsequent key forums advanced gender equality, most notably the World Conference on Human Rights, International Conference on Population and Development, World Summit on Social Development, Fourth World Conference on Women, and Habitat.

The process proposed by the Prep. Comm. for NGO participation is consistent with the openness of the CSD. WEDO also welcomes the call for multi-stakeholder dialogues with all the major groups, although we again urge gender balance in these dialogues.

June Zeitlin - WEDO.

Youth

As a first-time participant to a PrepCom, one thing strikes me as being very obvious concerning young people's participation in Earth Summit 2002 preparations: Youth stand to gain a lot from a structured multi-stakeholder process. Often the novices at the table, youth struggle to keep pace. As such, I think youth would greatly benefit from a predictable procedure for engagement that allows us to organise ourselves to make worthwhile contributions. What contributions we have to make? Recognising the lack of political and financial commitment to address the worldwide failure to implement Agenda 21 for starters.

Returning to my main point though, youth need to clarify how their work can contribute to the Prep. Comm. multi-stakeholder process. As such, there needs to be clarity about the role of the various dialogues and global thematic round tables and how these feed into intergovernmental negotiations, and ultimately, the outcomes of the Summit itself.

Of course, I think youth are well aware of their responsibility in all of this. Certainly the youth present at CSD10 recognised the importance of organisation in order to be an effective part of Summit preparations. We need to establish legitimate channels to spread information amongst ourselves and to optimise our diversity and degree of independent views. We also need to be more accessible to the general public and to other Major Groups. Ideally, we will see more and more evidence of this effort for international youth co-ordination.

Julie Larsen, United Nations Association in Canada.

Canada's Perspective

The recent 1st Earth Summit Prep Comm. accomplished what was required of it. It elected a bureau, confirmed the schedule of preparatory meetings, agreed on certain operating modalities and otherwise operationalised the UNGA resolution that authorised the Earth Summit in December 2000.

While some participants expected that the 1st Prep. Comm. would attempt to set themes for the Summit, it was clear that most countries still wished them to emerge from the regional and sub-regional meetings. The challenge for us all will be to identify a limited number of themes that have wide support and

can be effectively advanced through the preparatory process.

Canada strongly supports the UNEP initiative to improve international environmental governance, launched in February. We believe we need to take advantage of the special opportunity presented by the Summit to improve the financial viability, structure and operating procedures of the UN environment system which has grown in size and complexity since Rio.

Canada will also promote a focus on environment and health, sustainable communities, stewardship and conservation, innovation and partnerships. Environmental protection is not a luxury for developed countries, but a necessity for all countries.

As the preparatory process proceeds, we hope that participants will take account of the changes that have occurred since Rio and refrain from merely repeating Rio prescriptions for addressing outstanding issues. We need to be open to input from both governmental and non-governmental processes.

We also need to recognise that governments cannot do everything. Major Groups have come to play a key role both in the CSD and in number of international environmental and social processes. We need them to play a major role in the Earth Summit 2002 process and its follow up.

Richard Ballhorn.

South Africa's Perspective

The official outcome of Prep. Comm. 1 was relegated to the pages of history, merely days after the delegates flew out of JFK airport. Bulletins containing the 'final summary' and 'final decisions' flashed on the web. Perhaps all that is left is some space for multi-cultural perceptions of what transpired, and an expression of anticipation of what is still to come.

Governments were required to report on progress with preparatory activities, and agree on organisational aspects leading up to the Summit. These seemed to be relatively un-contentious issues and unlikely to derail the much needed outcome of a "constructive and positive atmosphere" and a firm foundation for the remaining 14 months of preparation. Yet the palpable relief at the successful closure of the 3 day session was a reminder of what is at stake in the lead up to Johannesburg 2002.

For South Africa, the positive response from delegates to the presentation on preparations for the Summit, was re-assuring. This country has taken on an immense responsibility, on behalf of the nations of Africa and the rest of the world. Our commitment is to create a space that promotes dialogue, inspires new approaches and provides the symbolism that is the stuff of memory and history - of a Summit that enables nations to unite in a global effort to operationalise sustainable development.

For the few South African 'first timers', the debate on single words, synonyms and punctuation, was a reality check. Does the present etiquette associated with international negotiations really allow space for such dynamic concepts as "a new deal"? Is there enough time, between now and the 2nd Prep. Comm., for the leaders of the world to assimilate what has been done so far in implementing Agenda 21, analyse what needs to be done, and propose options that may find currency?

The challenge is enormous, particularly for the nations of Africa. We are faced with the responsibility of turning the cerebral negotiations into action that addresses the increasing levels of poverty without compromising the natural systems that support us.

Judy Beaumont

Istanbul + 5 and Johannesburg: Changing the Dynamic

Of all the forces that characterize the beginning of the 21st Century, none, not even climate change, will have a more profound effect on human lives during the next century than the concentration of people and their activities in cities. David Hales reports on the upcoming review of the Habitat Agenda.

More people live in cities today than lived in the entire world in 1950. By 2025, two-thirds of humanity will live in cities, and 90% of those will be in cities in developing countries. Of the three people born each second, two are born in cities. Unless we drastically change our patterns of investment, most of those children will never receive a formal education. Already, well more than 100 million children between the ages of six and 11 are not in school. Most of these children are girls. A further 150 million including adolescents have dropped out without acquiring basic levels of literacy.

Our economies will be dominated by the forces of urbanization. To meet the energy demands of cities, more electrical generating capacity will be built between today and 2025 than in the entire 20th century, a market of around \$1 trillion dollars per decade. If we try to meet these needs in the future the way industrialized countries have done in the past, the consequences for the fight against climate change will be devastating.

Most jobs, and the vast majority of new jobs will be in cities, as will most of the unemployed. Our cities will breed new diseases, and place demands on our most biologically productive and valuable natural systems that we can only begin to analyze.

Cities are also beacons of hope, with potential advantages of size and scale leading to efficiency in provision of education, health care, and important breakthroughs in conserving energy and natural resources. They are sources of pride and inspiration, giving people a sense of place, and the opportunity for meaningful participation in governing their own futures. It is the city that will emerge as the counter force to the global corporations.

If Rio was our best attempt yet to map the path to a world that is characterized by sustainability and justice, it is clear beyond question or shadow of doubt that the path must go through the cities of the world.

As important as are the issues to be addressed in the Habitat context, the stakes for sustainable development are even higher. Istanbul + 5 can set the pattern for the General Assembly Special Session on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, and provide a welcome break from the sterile word smithing of the Commission on Sustainable Development, and so many other intergovernmental debates.

Rio was a breakthrough. It articulated the simple but revolutionary concept that healthy economies, healthy environment, and social justice are inseparable and mutually reinforcing elements of the same process, civilization. The post Rio Conferences, however, were primarily efforts to defend one's country against any real commitment to achieve sustainable development. If this pattern continues, the Rio framework and its institutions will be abandoned by those who must solve real problems of real people in real places. That this abandonment has already begun is apparent from the composition of CSD delegations and the content of CSD decisions.

Istanbul + 5 can reverse this trend. *Habitat* has a tradition of unique contributions: the meeting in Istanbul brought the stakeholder concept to life; it linked economic growth and environmental protection to justice in ways faithful to the vision of Rio; it involved city dwellers and their governments on the international scene to the continuing discomfort of sovereign states. Most important, the *Habitat Agenda* remains the only real attempt to apply the "act locally" dictum of Rio.

Habitat is a forum where nations can come together in unusual coalitions to address threats and dreams that we hold in common. It is a place where China and the United States can work together, one week after the United States accidentally bombed the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade, and join with Iran to build a unanimous commitment to protect children from lead poisoning.

While the preparatory sessions for Istanbul + 5 reveal little of this heritage, it is not too late.

Countries can agree on the central importance of the family without trying to impose definitions of acceptable sexual relationships, especially since no one will change their behavior - nor one government its laws - because of wording in the decisions of Istanbul + 5.

All can agree that every person needs housing - that it, like clean water and clean air and a meaningful job are necessary components of a healthy human life. We can also agree that all communities and societies worthy of the name will make provision of adequate housing a priority. We can do all that without prescribing a specific method to achieve the goal, and without impotent debate on which aspects of human rights are instrumental to which others, led by lawyers who care little about the practical outcome on the one billion people who spend each day in inadequate housing.

There is no one way to provide housing just as there is no single definition of adequate. Some societies may choose the public provision of housing; others may choose to invest in basic childhood education as the means of creating the individual capacity to achieve one's own right to adequate housing. No international group can choose one way for nations and cities, just as many nations cannot choose just one way for all cities and cultures.

On these issues and so many others, it is time to move from explaining why nations cannot do what must be done, to finding ways that nations can. Participants, including negotiators representing countries, can move from defending and promoting national values and practices to promoting the transition to sustainability. They can move from defending by debate to learning and changing by honestly sharing experiences and sincerely listening to messages from all participants.

. If we are to navigate the transition to sustainability success-

fully and peacefully, our multinational meetings must be places where broad and meaningful participation is the norm, where national representatives speak the truth with passion, and where we can create the vision of what is possible for the first time in human history - societies that are sustainable and just. Our next opportunity to achieve these goals is the Five-Year Review of the Habitat Agenda.

Earth Summit 2002 Preparations Gather Pace

Just as the International community catches its breath after CSD 10, Prep. Comm. I, the whole process kicks back into gear with a brace of sub-regional and Eminent Persons meetings. Network reports on the next step to the Summit.

The preparatory process for the Summit was initially mapped out back at the UN General Assembly last year. A clear incremental process was established to take the international community from its grass roots to the heady Summit over a period of 16 months starting with the first Prep. Comm. in May 2001. With this first step behind us, we know find ourselves surrounded by sub-regional and eminent persons meetings.

By this stage National preparations should be well and truly underway. Indeed a number of countries have posted contact and logistical details of their activities on the UN www.johannesburgsummit.org website. This provides the foundations for moving to the regional level on the basis of domestic experiences, priorities and barriers to implementation.

As a prequel to the regional events, taking place this Autumn, these sub-regional meetings are vital in terms of ensuring a bottom-up approach to the global review of implementation of agenda 21. To get a feel for the strength in depth of this level of preparation take a quick look at page 10 of this issue to see how busy next month is looking - in all corners of the globe.

The purpose of the sub-regional meetings is largely the same as that of the regional meetings. That being to:

- Assess main achievements in the region since Rio in the implementation of Agenda 21;
- Take a prospective outlook on the main constraints faced in the region in implementing Agenda 21;
- To identify new initiatives and commitments within regions towards overcoming constraints and fostering further progress.

Co-ordinating this level of review at the sub-regional level facilitates a look at those issues, processes and proposals which could be more effectively addressed at the sub-regional level.

In turn, offering more political space and options at the regional level meetings to follow.

In addition to the sub-regional meetings, we also have Eminent Persons' Roundtable meeting scheduled, again taking place at the regional level. These meetings serve the purpose of bringing together independent experts and representatives of the major groups to elaborate practical proposals and suggest innovative approaches aimed at expediting progress in the implementation of Agenda 21. In this sense they can be seen as perhaps the first step in setting the forward looking agenda for future work after the Summit.

The Eminent Persons Roundtable meetings largely run parallel to the sub-regional meeting, taking place between May and July 2001. Then feeding the regional meetings, taking place between September and November 2001. All of the above are co-ordinated by the UN Regional Economic Commissions, of which there are five: Africa, Europe, Latin America & the Caribbean, Western Asia and Asia Pacific. Regional offices of the UN Environment Programme are also playing a key role in supporting the regional process. The whole process is overseen by the Summit Secretariat, the UN Division for Economic & Social Affairs, who are co-ordinating the global Prep. Comms., under the auspices of CSD 10.

Turning to look at the bigger picture, how does this feed into the global preparations? With the task managers reports on each of the chapters of Agenda 21 currently being drafted, the sub-regional meetings, feeding into the regional prep. comms., will then feed into the second global prep. comm.. In addition to the regional eminent peoples roundtables, a series of global thematic roundtables are planned. These will

further develop the agenda along the same lines as those prescribed at the regional level - looking for innovative ideas for the further implementation of Agenda 21.

Taking place at the end of January 2002, Prep. Comm. II will be the first substantive session. Here we will see a drawing together of the Secretary General's report on the implementation of Agenda 21 - developed out of the task managers reports, with the regional assessments of Agenda 21. This will provide space for global level meetings of Major Groups and governments to initiate negotiations for the Summit. These global negotiations will be finalised by Prep. Comm IV in May at the Ministerial level, prior to being taken to the Summit for endorsement by heads of state.

Hopefully, what this brief article articulates is the importance to the overall process of getting involved now. The whole ethic of Earth Summit 2002 was built on a review of Agenda 21 from the bottom-up. It is vital for all those interested in inputting to the Earth Summit to engage at the sub-regional and regional level over the next few months, in order for the Summit to realise its full potential. Given the plethora of events planned around the world this may indicate a lack of any summer vacation this year, but there is always October 2002...

T. Middleton



A World of Opportunity

UNITED NATIONS FORUM ON FORESTS

Establishment of the UNFF and its objectives

The United Nations Forum on Forest (UNFF) was established as a subsidiary body to Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC) in October 2000. It builds on the five-year *ad hoc* process of Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) and Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF). Exceptionally within the ECOSOC system, the UNFF has a universal membership i.e. it is open to all governments.

The main objective of the UNFF is to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests and to strengthen long-term political commitment to this end.

The UNFF was established in particular to facilitate the implementation of the actions agreed in the international forest policy deliberations since UNCED (1992). These actions include the Forest Principles and an extensive set of proposals for actions from the IPF/IFF process (1995-2000). The UNFF will take steps, as a matter of priority, towards financial support and technology transfer to enable the implementation of sustainable forest management in developing countries. It will also need to consider, towards the end of its initial five-year period, the development of a legal framework on all types of forests.

First session of the UNFF, June 2001

The UNFF had its organizational meeting in February 2001. Its first substantive session will be held on 11-22 June in New York. At this session, the UNFF will set the agenda for the global level forest policy deliberations for the next five years, as it will adopt its Multi-Year Programme of Work. Decisions will need to be made on, *inter alia*, thematic focuses for each session, monitoring, assessment and reporting on progress, organization of future multi-stakeholder dialogues and, very importantly, on timing of ministerial segments. Should UNFF decide to organise a ministerial level segment at UNFF 2, in 2002, the session would be held in San Jose, Costa Rica. Otherwise, UNFF 2 would meet in Geneva.

Another main focus at UNFF 1 will be the development of the UNFF Plan of Action, with financial provisions, for the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action.

Involvement of multiple stakeholders in UNFF

ECOSOC decided that the UNFF would operate in a transparent and participatory manner. Governments have therefore encouraged wide participation of non-governmental organizations, the private sector and other interested stakeholders.

A way of receive inputs to the UNFF process from multiple stakeholders is to organise multi-stakeholder dialogues. During UNFF 1, a side event will be organised to provide an opportunity for all forest-relevant stakeholders to participate in an informal setting to share their views on the format, scope, goal and expected outcome of the UNFF multi-stakeholder dialogues, and to discuss how to make effective use of such dialogues during forthcoming UNFF sessions.

Collaborative Partnership on Forests established to support the UNFF

Closer coordination and cooperation among international organizations, particularly the UN organizations, has been called upon in various occasions. A step towards this goal was the recent establishment of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF). The CPF was founded in April 2001 by eight organizations (members of the former Interagency Task Force on Forests) to support the work of UNFF.

The CPF members include currently: Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, (CBD), Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat (DESA), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO, Chair), International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Bank. The CPF membership is expected to ultimately include about a dozen international forest-related institutions. Currently, the Secretariats of the Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD), Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC) and the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) have been invited to join the CPF.

The CPF is establishing a CPF Network to facilitate interaction and communication with a wide range of international and regional organizations, including NGOs, private sector entities and other major groups.

An open CPF-NGO meeting will be organised during UNFF 1 to exchange views on how to build effective collaboration between the CPF and NGOs in support of the work of the UNFF.

Looking forward

The policy environment and focus in the international forest policy fora have changed significantly in the past decade. The five year IPF/IFF process (1995-2000) helped to understand forests as a cross-sectoral issue and providing multiple benefits to people, environment and economic. A trend may be emerging in international forest policy to further emphasise the role of forests in providing livelihoods, employment, income generation and subsistence, as well as alleviating poverty.

A Variety of views flourish on the future of the UNFF process. One view is, however, common to all, that it is now time to move from dialogue to action. Therefore, the greatest challenge at UNFF 1 will most likely be the development of the UNFF Plan of Action, and engagement of all stakeholders – governments, CPF members, other international and regional organizations, institutions and instruments, as well as NGOs – in effective implementation of the IPF and IFF recommendations. Well designed UNFF Plan of Action, with clear targets and time tables would provide a strong message from the forest sector to Earth Summit 2002 (Johannesburg, South Africa, in September 2002).

Further information on UNFF is available on the website of the UNFF Secretariat at:

www.un.org/esa/sustdev/forests.htm

Tiina Vähänen

Forest Policy Advisor, UNFF Secretariat.

E-mail: vahanen@un.org

Meet the International Advisory Board

World Information Transfer

Contact: Claudia Strauss

Web-address: www.worldinfo.org

Summary of Organisation:

World Information Transfer, Inc. (WIT) was formed in 1987 in response to the Chernobyl nuclear disaster in Ukraine. A small group of international health professionals, realising the long-term health implications of Chernobyl, established the organisation with the general purpose of promoting health and environmental literacy. The underlying premise was that accessible, accurate information is the surest way to protect citizens from devastating health effects of other environmental disasters.

Key programmes:

World Ecology Report - a quarterly newsletter of current international information on environmental and health issues. The report is published in 5 languages and is distributed to WIT members via WIT's regional directors.

Annual International Conferences - titled Health & Environment: Global Partners for global solutions. Held at the UN Headquarters in NY, the conferences bring together international experts from medicine, science, government, education, business and the media.

Information Communication Technologies - CD-ROM Humanities Development Library. Also been invited to speak at the UN ECOSOC High Level Segment on ICT in 2000.

Humanitarian relief to hospitals and orphanages - to areas devastated by environmental degradation in Nations in transition.

Sustainability Centres - First established in Kiev, Ukraine, has since moved to Lviv. A second centre opened in Beirut.

Regions Covered:

Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, France, Latin America, Middle East, North America, Oceania, Western Europe.

Key Partners:

CONGO, IAEA, WHO,

UNED's International Advisory Board

(IAB) took advantage of PrepCom I to gather together its members for their second meeting.

Hosted by BP's New York office on the morning of 28th

April, 40 board member representatives discussed the 'Towards Earth Summit 2002' project's achievements since its inception in 2000, and offered feedback on the work programme planned to take us up to early 2002.

In joining together key stakeholder networks the IAB meeting also provided an arena for presentation and comparison of member organisation's plans for 2002, thus promoting linkages rather than duplication.

Two key points to come out of the meeting were that stakeholders agree on the need for an integrative agenda at the Summit, ensuring contemplation of the cross-sectoral barriers and drivers for sustainable development, rather than addressing only discrete issue areas. Also, Board members requested that the Towards Earth Summit 2002 project use this second year to ensure that the global regions are incorporated in our work – via outreach in UN languages other than English, as well as ensuring input from the regions in terms of articles for Network and input to the briefing papers and website.

Finally, the meeting was also an opportunity to welcome the Board's new Co-Chair, Hespina Rukato of South Africa's Minerals & Energy Policy Centre (MEPC). Hespina has worked at Zimbabwe's Ministry of Environment & Tourism, as well as the Group for Environmental Monitoring in Johannesburg, but joined MEPC three years ago. As its Programme Manager for Energy Hespina brings to the Advisory Board expertise in what will surely be a key issue in the run up to 2002, as well as knowledge of stakeholders within South Africa. Hespina will join existing Chair Derek Osborn in promoting the project's work towards 2002, as well as acting as a liaison point for IAB members in the Summit's host country.

Copies of the minutes of this meeting are available from Beth Hiblin: bhiblin@earthsummit2002.org.

Biography - Dr Hespina Rukato

After Graduating from the University of Zimbabwe with a BSc. Honours degree in Politics and Administration, Hespina worked for a few years in the Ministry of Environment and Tourism in Zimbabwe.

She went on to do an MA in Environmental Policy and Planning (1995), and completed a PhD in Environmental Management Standards with the University of the Witwatersrand in 2000.

Between 1996 and 1998 Hespina worked as a project manager for the Group for Environmental Monitoring (GEM) in Johannesburg.

She joined the Minerals and Energy Policy Centre (MEPC) in 1998 as a Senior Policy Analyst-Energy. Hespina is now Programme Manager for Energy at MEPC. Her main expertise lies in policy research and analysis in the fields of energy, climate change and development.

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

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Diary Dates, Events & Conferences

June	First UNEP/GEF Global International Water Assessment (GIWA) General Assembly. Kalmar, Sweden. Contact: www.giwa.net
6-8 June	Earth Summit 2002 Eminent Persons' Roundtable - Europe & North America region. Vail, Colorado, USA. Contact: www.johannesburgsummit.org
6-8 June	UN General Assembly Special Session on the Review & Appraisal of the Implementation of the Habitat Agenda. New York, USA. Contact: www.istanbul+5.htm
11-14 June	Earth Summit 2002 Sub-regional Preparatory Meeting - Northern Africa region. Tunis, Tunisia. Contact: www.johannesburgsummit.org
13-15 June	Earth Summit 2002 Sub-regional Preparatory Meeting - Southeast Asia region. Manila, the Philippines. Contact: www.johannesburgsummit.org
14-15 June	Earth Summit 2002 Sub-regional Preparatory Meeting - Southern Cone region. Santiago, Chile. Contact: www.johannesburgsummit.org
11-22 June	First Substantive Session of the UN Forum on Forests. New York, USA. Contact: www.un.org/esa/sustdev/unff_2001_fsm.htm
18-20 June	Earth Summit 2002 Eminent Persons' Roundtable - Latin America & the Caribbean Region. Bridgeport, Barbados. Contact: www.johannesburgsummit.org
21-22 June	Earth Summit 2002 Sub-regional Preparatory Meeting - Meso-American Region. San Salvador, El Salvador. Contact: www.johannesburgsummit.org
25-27 June	UN General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS. New York, USA. Contact: www.unaids.org/whatsnew/others/un_special/index.html
16-27 July	Resumed COP6/14th Session of the UNFCCC Subsidiary Bodies. Bonn, Germany. Contact: www.unfccc.int

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

- **UN Forum on Forest first Substantive Session - Outcomes & Analysis**
- **UNGASS on HIV/AIDS - Outcomes & Analysis**
- **Istanbul + 5 - Outcomes & Analysis**
- **UNFCCC COP6 Resumed - Preview**



Your Input is our Output.
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 Contact the editor at: tmiddleton@earthsummit2002.org.

