

New global treaty hailed as major step forward

On 10 December 2000 one of the many important initiatives growing out of the 1992 Earth Summit came to fruition. With origins in oceans chapter 17 of Agenda 21, the UNEP-facilitated global treaty on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) was completed. A diplomatic signing conference will be held in Stockholm, Sweden from 21-23 May 2001 – resulting in the “Stockholm POPs Convention.”

The POPs treaty represents the most ambitious effort by the global community, to date, to address toxic chemicals. Agreed by consensus of the 122 negotiating governments, the treaty will, *inter alia*: eliminate or severely restrict production and use of a pernicious group of pesticides and industrial chemicals; ensure environmentally sound management and destruction of chemical waste; and prevent emergence of new chemicals with POPs-like characteristics.

The new convention targets some of the world’s most dangerous chemicals. POPs are a global problem requiring a global solution. They pose a particular hazard because of four common characteristics: they are toxic; they are persistent, resisting normal processes that break down contaminants; they accumulate in body fat and are passed from mother to fetus; and they can travel great distances on wind and water currents. Even small quantities of POPs can wreak havoc in human and animal tissue, causing nervous system damage, diseases of the immune system, reproductive and developmental disorders, and cancers.

Treaty highlights:

- **Precaution as guiding principle.** Precaution, including transparency and public participation, is operationalized throughout the treaty, with explicit references in the preamble, objective, provisions for adding POPs, and determination

of best available technologies. The objective states: “Mindful of the precautionary approach as set forth in Principle 15 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the objective of this Convention is to protect human health and the environment from persistent organic pollutants.”

- **Funding commitments enabling all countries to participate.** Developed country Parties commit to providing new and additional financial resources to developing country Parties and Parties with economies in transition. On an interim basis, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) will serve as the treaty’s principal financial mechanism, subject to COP review.
- **Eliminating intentionally produced POPs.** Of 12 targeted POPs, 8 are pesticides, most of which are slated for immediate bans once the treaty takes effect. A longer phase-out is planned for certain PCB uses. DDT provisions include the goal of ultimate elimination, limiting use to disease vector control in accordance with WHO guidelines. Parties that have regulatory and assessment schemes for new chemicals are called on to “take measures to regulate with the aim of preventing” the production and use of new POPs.
- **Ultimately eliminating byproduct POPs.** For dioxins, furans, and hexa-



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chlorobenzene (HCB), Parties are called on to reduce total releases "with the goal of their continuing minimization and, where feasible, ultimate elimination." The treaty urges the use of substitute or modified materials, products, and processes to prevent the formation and release of by-product POPs.

- **Environmentally sound management and disposal of POPs wastes** (including stockpiles, products, articles in use, and materials contaminated with POPs). The POP content in waste is to be destroyed, irreversibly transformed, or otherwise disposed of in an environmentally sound manner in cooperation with the Basel Convention.
- **Strict limitations and bans on trade.** Trade of POPs is allowed only for the purpose of environmentally sound disposal or in other very limited circumstances. Delegates rejected a proposed World Trade Organization "supremacy clause" that could have encouraged States to challenge the treaty's trade measures.
- **Limited and transparent exemptions.** Most exemptions to the treaty requirements are chemical- and country-specific. But there are broader exceptions for use in laboratory-scale research; for small quantities in the possession of an end-user; and for quantities occurring as unintentional trace contaminants in products. Notification procedures and other conditions apply to exemptions for POPs as constituents of manufactured articles and for certain closed-system site-limited intermediates.

More than 300 NGOs participated in the International POPs Elimination Network (IPEN), an invaluable network for exchanging information and developing strategies. IPEN organized NGO workshops prior to each negotiating session, helped fund NGO participation, and coordinated numerous e-mail list servs and conference calls.

WWF, a lead NGO in the important and sometimes very contentious negotiations, welcomes the POPs treaty as a giant step forward. More broadly, all key stakeholders - governments, chemical industry trade associations, and NGOs - have expressed support for the final treaty text. Nonetheless, while a solid treaty outcome has been achieved, vigilance must continue. Rio+10 provides a timely opportunity for all stakeholders to work together to: a) expedite ratification by the 50 countries required for the treaty's entry into force; b) examine additional chemicals for early inclusion in the treaty; and c) take national, regional, and private sector actions that go beyond treaty provisions, advancing Agenda 21's blueprint for action as we move forward into the 21st century.

The final POPs treaty text is available on UNEP's website, at <http://irptc.unep.ch.pops/>

By *Cliff Curtis and Cynthia Palmer Olsen, WWF*

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Editorial

The 2001 Spring Conference season seems to be upon us. Being kicked off in earnest by UNEP's 21st Governing Council Session, the next 4 months are action packed - culminating in the first Preparatory Committee for the Earth Summit in May. In between are a frenzy of events taking place around the world. There is hardly an issue covered by the first Earth Summit not to be debated in one conference room or another.

Recent progress of hazardous chemicals from the POPs process have certainly set the international community off on the right foot. Whether that momentum can be maintained is another matter.

Its clear that a world full of lethal chemicals is in nobodies interest and the signing of a convention to that fact must be applauded. Debate on how we trade as a global community, which trees we allow to stay standing, or how much of the planets surface we turn into a beach appear to be a little more complex.

Of course at each of these meetings new battle lines are drawn as different interests are tabled. If enough interests are offered, surely common ground will present itself, any pragmatist may say. And **Network** is nothing if not pragmatic - there are certainly plenty of interests presented in these pages.

So, first stop UNEP's GC then. You can read about some very lively battle lines being drawn up in Nairobi elsewhere in this issue. If there is uncertainty in the air, one things for sure, the next month will certainly be one to watch.

T. Middleton, The Editor

News, News, News...

The Worlds two Forum's

At time of going to press the Annual World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland will be drawing to a close (Jan. 25th-30th). However, this year the Forum has company. Running side-by-side the first World Social Forum is also taking place on the other side of the globe in Brazil.

Now in its 31st Year and billed as the world's global business summit, the Economic Forum brings together business and political leaders to address key economic, social and societal issues. The desire of the Forum is to promote discussions about the direction of the global economy whilst improving the state of the world. Indeed the theme of this years meeting is Sustaining Growth and Bridging the Divides: A Framework for our Global Future.

Meanwhile, the World Social Forum proclaims to be a new international arena for the creation and exchange of social and economic projects that promote human rights, social justice and sustainable development. Designed to provide space for building 'economic alternatives', exchanging information and for strengthening South-North NGO alliances, the Forum advocates greater participation by civil society in international financial institutions such as the IMF, World Bank and WTO.

Both meetings accommodate the participation of all stakeholders. However, recent criticism of the hidden (business) agenda of the Economic Forum is reflected by the Social Forum which is openly promoting ethics of transparency and accountability within its process.

In response, the Economic Forum as looking at the opportunities presented by economic expansion to address many of the issues being addressed at the Social Forum. Claude Smadja, the Economic Forum's Managing Director recently stated 'This years programme is both broad and deep. The issue of globalisation and its impact continues to dominate discussions about foreign investment and economic development, but the long term health of the international economy is also critical. After

all, its will be harder to bridge the divides (between developed and developing) without strong economic growth' he concluded.

Taking a different perspective, the Social Forum's agenda will focus on creating international strategies for grassroots organisations, building proposals to democratise international institutions, creating sustainable development proposals to eradicate poverty and hunger and to protect the environment.

What will be interesting is to see what proposals these two separate processes can achieve in addressing many of the same issues.

Contact: www.weforum.org &
www.forumsocialmundail.org.br/ingles/forum.

UNEP to host Global Youth

Retreat

Thirty two youth leaders from 25 countries will be meeting in Mombassa, Kenya, from January 29th to February 4th, for the 2nd UNEP Global Youth Retreat.

As 1 of the 9 major groups identified in Rio in 1992 responsible for implementing Agenda 21, Delegates will be discussing meaningful ways to strengthen existing collaboration between UNEP and youth organisations worldwide. They will review youth involvement in local and international environmental initiatives and negotiations. A vital topic for discussion will be the upcoming session of UNEP's Governing Council, and ways through which youth can actively participate.

The Global Youth Retreat is a major activity of UNEP's Children and Youth Programme. Other activities of the Programme include the organisation of the UNEP Global Youth Forum, the International Children's Conference on the Environment & the Development of global networks and publications for children & Youth.

The main outcome of the retreat will be the election of the UNEP Youth Advisory Council - a body that liases with youth organisations worldwide and advises UNEP on better ways of involving youth in its activities. The Council also represents youth in inter-governmental and international environmental negotiations.

The retreat will be officially opened by UNEP's Dep. Exec. Dir., Mr. Shafqat Kakakhel, and Mr. Najib Balala, President of the Mombassa Chamber of Commerce. Other highlights of the Retreat include a Clean-up Mombassa campaign being organised with the Kenyan Environment Trust and Schools in Mombassa on January 31st.

At the conclusion of the retreat, the youth leaders will travel to Nairobi where they will address Governments and participate in the Governing Council as observer.

New Company Formed to Enable

Exhibition at UN HQ in New York

Global Development Solutions Inc, a not for profit entity, has been registered in New York this week. This incorporated company has been formed to enable an exhibition that will be held at the UN headquarters in New York during April 2001, called

Energy and Transport for the Future.

Global Development Solutions Inc. will act as the conduit between the exhibition and the financing of the project, with the auditing of this event being conducted by Arthur Andersen. The exhibition is to be run as a self-financing project, and finance will be sought from Governments, private sector and foundations from today.

Energy and Transport for the Future 2001 (ETF2001) is a special event demonstrating world efforts to achieve sustainability in the critical fields of Energy and Transport. The exhibition is being championed by the Canadian Government and they are currently gaining support from other Governments.

ETF2001 will run parallel to the Ninth Session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, (CSD) attended by over 100 national government Ministers (Energy, Transport and Environment), Civil Society and Industry. The Exhibition is the first ever event of its kind to take place on the North Lawn at the United Nations Headquarters, in New York City, and is a unique collaborative venture between the UN, national governments, NGOs and Industry.

The project management of the exhibition will be undertaken by Sustainable Development International Ltd (SDILtd), who will oversee the project from initiation to completion. The Exhibition will be of a museum standard, focusing on educating delegates and participants and also the general public as to the partnerships that have been formed between stakeholders, within the fields of energy and transport. The Exhibition will be open to the general public and will help to define sustainable development through tangible examples of best practice.

Exhibitors are invited to subscribe to the Exhibition via the web site www.etf2001.org This web site has been designed by the UK based web design company C21. (Please see links page on the website) Applications will be reviewed by the Exhibit Committee with regard to how conclusively the proposed display tells a successful story of situating a particular piece of technology in advancing energy and transportation within the context of sustainable development. The Exhibit Committee will consult with the Patrons' Circle and Friends of the Exhibit in addition to looking for balance between developed and developing country representation, regional representation, alongside small and medium size enterprises (SMES). It will also seek to illustrate strategic partnerships as well as the engagement of Civil Society.

For further information please view <http://www.etf2001.org>

Global Development Solutions

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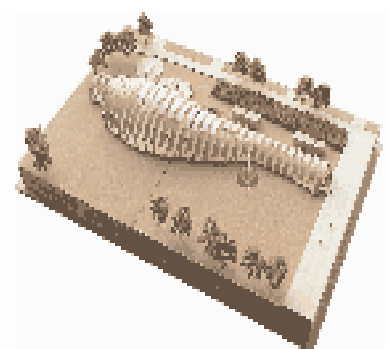
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The new look North Lawn at UN HQ?



PREPARATION OF UNEP'S GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT OUTLOOK

As world leaders prepare for Earth Summit 2002, work on the third Global Environment Outlook (GEO) – the flagship report on state of the environment of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) – is far advanced with many sub-regional reports already under review.

The GEO-3 report, which is being prepared by UNEP's Division of Early Warning and Assessment (DEWA) and its network of 35 collaborating centres and partners in different parts of the world – will provide crucial input to the Rio +10 preparatory process.

"GEO-3 will be published in March 2002 – 10 years after the first Earth Summit 1992 and 30 years after the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment in 1972," says DEWA Director Timothy Foresman.

He adds: "GEO-3 will help set in a hopeful and positive tone an action-oriented environmental agenda at the Earth Summit in 2002 on global and regional trends as it delivers relevant and timely information to the world's leaders and environment ministers."

The GEO-3 report will place major emphasis on providing an integrated explanation of trends by identifying their root causes and drivers within a retrospective period between 1972-2002. It will also analyse the relationships between policy and environment to show how policy can impact on environment and how the environment can drive policy. An evaluation will be made of whether policy responses over the past 30 years are appropriate for the next 30 years.

Sectoral areas will be used as the entry points for assessment. However, the cross-cutting, integrative nature of environmental issues will be emphasized, with integrated analysis of themes and policy impacts where appropriate and emphasis on geographical and sectoral interlinkages.

Description and analysis while primarily targeted at global

and regional levels will also include sub-regional differentiation where appropriate. The analysis will focus on priority issues, with assessment of vulnerability, hot spots and emerging issues.

The analysis of environmental trends will take into consideration the widest possible range of social, economic, political and cultural drivers and root causes – demographics, production and consumption, poverty, urbanization, industrialization, governance, conflict, globalization, finance and information.

Special focus will be placed on the impacts of national, regional and global policies, including multilateral environmental agreements. The assessment will take into consideration not only environmental policy but also the impacts of general and sectoral policies on environmental issues.

Using a 2002-2032 time frame for the outlook chapter, which will be based on four scenarios, GEO-3 will contain a forward-looking and integrated analysis linked to the major issues identified in the retrospective section and contrasting conventional and sustainable paths.

The initial global-level analysis will be extended to regions and sub-regions, identifying potential areas of vulnerability and hot spots of the future. Forecasted trends in the environment will be developed for the next 30 years, quantitatively wherever possible.

The final section of GEO-3 will include positive policy and action items, linked to the conclusions of the earlier sections and targeted at different categories and levels of decision-makers and actors. It will elaborate the conditions and capacities required for successful application of policies and actions.

GEO-3, which will be published in hard copy as well as on the Internet, will be distributed to policymakers and world leaders throughout the world.

GEO-3 will be one of several critical policy products of the Global Environment Outlook (GEO) Project launched by UNEP in 1995. The project has two components:

- A global environmental assessment process that is cross-sectoral, participatory and consultative. It builds consensus on priority issues and actions through dialogue among policy-makers and scientists at regional and global levels. It also aims to strengthen environmental assessment capacity in the regions through training and 'learning-by-doing'.
- The GEO Report series makes periodic reviews of the state of the world's environment, and provides guidance for decision-making processes such as the formulation of environmental policies, action planning and resource allocation. Other outputs include technical reports, a Web site and a GEO for Youth.

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GEO-2002

A coordinated global network of Collaborating Centres is the core of the GEO process. These centres have played an increasingly important role in preparing GEO reports. They are now responsible for almost all the regional inputs, combining top-down integrated assessment with bottom-up environmental reporting.

Other United Nations agencies contribute to the GEO Process through the United Nations System-wide Earthwatch, coordinated by UNEP. In particular, they provide substantive data and information on the many environmentally-related issues that fall under their individual mandates. Regional consultations and other mechanisms to promote dialogue between scientists and policy-makers are an essential element of the GEO

Interest in GEO reports has necessitated the second report – GEO-2000 – being published in an unprecedented seven languages; Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish. A total of about 15,000 copies have been printed, and it is expected that GEO-3 will surpass this figure.

The GEO-2000 is available on the Internet at the following sites:

Japan: <http://www-cger.nies.go.jp/geo2000/>
 Kenya: <http://www.unep.org/geo2000/>
 Mexico: <http://www.rolac.unep.mx/geo2000/>
 Norway: <http://www.grida.no/geo2000/>
 Switzerland: <http://www.grid.unep.ch/geo2000/>
 United States: <http://grid2.cr.usgs.gov/geo2000/>

Contact (DEWA) Email: geo@unep.org

Will Forests be on the Agenda in 2002?

In 1995 the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) created the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) to pick up the forest debate where the Earth Summit left it. Although it was to be an ad-hoc, 'informal' process directly under the CSD umbrella, creation of the IPF essentially gave the this debate a separate life of its own.

The IPF was designed as a two-year, open-ended intergovernmental debate and negotiation, operating according to CSD rules, open to CSD member-governments. Although its agenda covered a broad range of topics, three issues dominated the debate: trade, financial resources, and the question of whether there should be a global forest convention.

The forest convention issue was particularly interesting. At UNCED, most NGOs and many Northern governments supported a convention, while most Southern governments and the forest industry were opposed. At the IPF, Malaysia, Indonesia and the timber industry joined Canada and the European Union in pushing hard for a convention, while most NGOs and the USA, among others, opposed the idea.

After four two-week sessions and numerous intersessional meetings, the IPF completed its work in Spring 1997 and presented about 150 non-binding "Proposals for Action" to the

CSD. Because it had not been able to achieve consensus on several key issues on its agenda, the IPF also recommended that its work continue through a *second* phase - a UN Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF). The UN General Assembly Special Session in 1997 endorsed the Proposals for Action and established the IFF as the IPF's successor.

The IFF was essentially the same process under a different name, with virtually the same agenda, participants, and two-year life-span. A new issue on the IFF agenda was "Implementation of the IPF Proposals for Action", which NGOs felt should have such high priority that they did their own independent review of government implementation efforts

The IFF presented its own set of Proposals for Action to the CSD in February 2000. Again, however, major issues remained un-resolved, including trade, financial resources and a forest convention; so the IFF recommended a *third* phase of the debate - a new UN Forum on Forests (UNFF). The UN ECOSOC formally established the UNFF in October 2000.

The UNFF is intended to be different. It is not an ad hoc process but a formal subsidiary body of ECOSOC, with its membership now open to all members of the UN. Its initial life-span will be five years. It will have a "High-Level Ministerial Segment". It will explicitly set aside, for the next several years, the controversial debate over a forest convention. It is directed to explore new approaches to issues and new forms of major group participation such as the type of "multi-stakeholder dialogues" hosted by the CSD.

Exactly *how* different the UNFF will be, however, is unclear. Like its predecessors it has a mandate to deal specifically with trade, financial resources, and the implementation of IPF/IFF Proposals for Action, among other issues. It will involve the same government delegations with the same interests and same disagreements. Some NGOs have high hopes for the UNFF, and intend to push hard for concrete action and implementation of existing agreements (e.g., the Proposals for Action), and to take advantage of the multi-stakeholder dialogues and High-Level Segments. Other NGOs have serious doubts, and fully expect the new body to be plagued by the same weaknesses and political posturing as its predecessors, and to get bogged down all over again in interminable debate and negotiation.

The first real indication of which one of these views may be the most realistic will come when the UNFF meets from 12-16 February 2001 in New York for its critical organizational and agenda-setting session. The UNFF's five-year Programme of Work will be set at this meeting, the issues it will focus on will be specified, and its procedural mechanisms will be laid out. Interested NGOs plan to be there to put their views and proposals forward, and to make it very clear that they expect something different from the new body. There's one thing they can all agree on: they don't want the IPF/IFF all over again.

Whether forests will emerge onto the agenda for Earth Summit 2002 will depend a lot on what happens during the UNFF's first year of life.

William E. Mankin, Global Forest Policy Project



Is the sun setting on a Forest Convention?

UNEP: success or disaster with civil society as 2002 approaches

To the untrained eye, GC 21 may seem like any other UNEP conference. Browsing through the background documents, may reveal something else – UNEP is making efforts to gather momentum before the Summit on Sustainable Development in South Africa next year. But UNEP may not have all the needed allies on board to do just that – yet.

UNEP – out of the quagmire

There is no concealing that UNEP over the past decade or so, has been exposed to repeated criticism for not performing.

CSD, the Commission on Sustainable Development, strategically placed in New York at UN Headquarters, seems to be getting and absorbing an increasingly larger share of the political momentum related to environmental and sustainable development questions, relegating UNEP to a place in the political shadow.

This year's CSD on energy, atmosphere and transport will grab at the very heart of the environment conventions, UNEP's mainstay activity and the foundations of the Kyoto protocol.

A whole session in Nairobi is devoted to UNEP's contributions to future sessions of the CSD – Will UNEP be able to send a strong message to CSD, or will GC 21 merely be writing a parenthesis, and leave the big discussion again to New York?

New strategy?

To counter that, UNEP needs to take the lead in a number of environment and sustainable development areas, revitalize political interest in the global environment agenda, re-establish itself as lead agency both in the world and within the UN on these questions, generate new and additional finances for its operations and receive the political support it deserves. No small task for a UN agency whose primary concern is an issue usually give only token recognition by world leaders.

Time may be the scarcest resource for UNEP. The French, with the tacit support of the EU, has tabled a suggestion to completely rewrite UNEP and perhaps even substitute it with a World Environment Organization. That may turn the Summit in 2002 into a watershed for UNEP.

Since the present General Director Klaus Topfer took the helm, UNEP seems to have taken a different course. But UNEP

will need allies at the Summit – is civil society an important one?

Civil society – only symbolically accepted?

The session in Nairobi starts with an NGO multistakeholder workshop. The official GC starts on the 5th. UNEP enjoys a long history with civil society at the UN. Still, this relationship is far less easygoing and less meaningful to the NGOs than the one CSD has with “major groups”. The way the NGO workshop in Nairobi is now set up, makes NGOs a prefix to the GC, and not an integrated part of the negotiations. The language in the GC documents outlining plans of action is affirmative and strong in most cases except when civil society is involved. It then becomes wishy-washy, to say the least. This conveys a message likely to create almost an offensive distance to the group that likes to consider themselves grass-roots representatives of “we, the peoples of the UN”.

Benign neglect, indifference to the works of UNEP, and opposition may be the end result. Not from ill will, but from a growing suspicion that UNEP may not be up to its mandate – to work with the peoples of the world to safeguard the global environment.

Nothing new on the agenda front.

Nothing on the agenda seems to deal with the above, and there seems to be no urgency in view of the coming Summit. Still, thumbing through the background documents shows UNEP working in high gear. But will dealing with these issues in a “business as usual” philosophy suffice?

GC 21 will give us discussions on much needed environmental policy instruments; a possible mine-field on the agenda is “technological transfer and industry”; a separate theme is “Support to Africa”. Expected progress-reports on the next GEO-Report will be presented. A reasonably large segment will be on “home turf issues” – the environmental conventions, environmental emergencies, polluter pays principle, urbanization and environment, the often frustrating discussion on finance, - in short the nitty-gritty work of UNEP. Ample space is also given to emerging policy issues – a recurring theme on all UN conferences, perhaps a serious agenda label for allowing politicians to speculate about the future. This topic may be of prime interest to political observers as emerging policy issues is a topic at the “Global Ministerial Forum”.

Civil society plays a pivotal role

The challenge facing UNEP at the Summit and the integration of civil society should be emerging policy issues. But maybe these issues are politically too contentious for GC 21?

Maybe, to use UN jargon, they will be discussed as a non-issues, with non-people at non-meetings. For the time being, the informal corridors and coffeebars may be the right venues for this topic. If UNEP's overall performance becomes a bigger issue than expected, especially at the Summit, UNEP may want to recruit support from as many allies as possible as soon as possible. If accepted, civil society can play a pivotal role here.

Jan Gustav Stradenaes



Addressing the world

Little support for the fight against desertification

The 4th Conference of Parties of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) ended in Germany late last year. Heads of state, ministers and delegates and from over 170 countries met between December 11-22 to call for new resources and enhanced commitments to combat desertification and drought worldwide.

A request to explore the best options for enhancing the support of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in assisting countries affected by desertification, especially in Africa, to implement the UNCCD was launched. Compared with the Convention on Biodiversity and on Climate Change, which received funds from the GEF, the CCD is highly neglected by the international donor community. "We have not seen any practical commitment from the World Bank and developing countries have no access to the GEF Funds to support the convention", Mr Hama Arba Diallo, Executive Secretary of the UNCCD, complained. Diallo wants to get rid of the image of a 'low-profile-convention', widely regarded as "the poor man's treaty".

"We were hoping however to see more commitment from the international community," he continued. "We have heard many positive statements, I believe that we have seen the expression of political good will, but we are now looking forward to seeing good will translate into concrete action."

A key success of the conference is the establishment of a Committee for Reviewing Implementation of the Convention (CRIC). During the session, it was possible for delegates to review 34 of the over 150 reports submitted between 1999 and 2000. Countries of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Northern Mediterranean that have already adopted a National Action Programme to Combat Desertification (NAP), illustrated initiatives undertaken, successes accomplished and problems encountered. The CRIC will also enable developing countries to gauge their programmes as well as provide a measure for the commitment pledged by donor institutions.

The committee will start its work in March 2001 with the aim of reviewing all 150 country reports before the next Conference of Parties. "The review of reports represents a most important accomplishment of this Conference," said Diallo, "as reports reflect the enormous efforts made by affected countries to combat desertification."

Delegates also approved a Declaration of commitments to enhance special efforts to combat and prevent desertification, and/or mitigate the effects of drought between 2001-2010. They expressed concern that, despite important efforts made by all interested partners, adequate financial and other resources

have not yet been mobilized, thus constraining the ability of affected developing countries to fulfil their commitments under the Convention.

They urged all actors to take a set of proactive financial measures, and indicated strategic areas for action at all levels, including development of new and renewable energy sources; sustainable land use management; sustainable use and management of rangelands; development of sustainable agricultural and ranching production systems; launching of reforestation/afforestation programmes and intensification of soil conservation programmes; development of early warning systems for food security and drought forecasting.

The Declaration reaffirms the invitation to Parties to take action to improve and facilitate further access of affected developing countries to the GEF resources for the implementation of the Convention.

Finally, delegates also adopted an additional implementation annex to the UNCCD for country Parties of Central and Eastern Europe, in addition to those already existing for Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Northern Mediterranean.

They declared that new and specific attention should be devoted to countries of Central and Eastern Europe affected by desertification and drought, in consideration of their particular conditions which include, among others, problems and challenges related to the process of economic transition; the variety of forms of land degradation; the crisis condition of agriculture; the unsustainable exploitation of water resources; forest coverage losses; and the risk of growing economic hardship and deteriorating social conditions in areas affected by land degradation, desertification and drought. The Annex contains provisions for the preparation of Action Programmes, technical and scientific cooperation, financial resources.

"Time to act is now," said Mr. Diallo. "People worldwide have been losing their arable land, their sources of income. Concrete action is possible, and the necessary steps have been identified. But the more we wait, the more opportunities we lose, and there is no reason why we should lose them."

Drought and desertification seriously threaten the livelihoods of over 1.2 billion people worldwide who depend on the land for most of their needs. They undermine the land productivity, and the populations' wealth and health in over 110 countries.

The Convention stresses the global dimension of desertification. It calls for increased efforts towards the implementation of national, subregional and regional action programmes to combat desertification, and the promotion of sustainable development particularly in the dry lands of our planet. It further calls for the full involvement of civil society in this process.

The Convention is a legally binding instrument resulting from the Rio Conference on Environment and Development (1992). It entered into force in 1996 and 172 countries are currently Parties to it.

Summarised by: Anne Daehling, ELCI

Contact: www.unccd.int

Based on The East African, January 8-14. An interview by C. Mgendi and Press release of UNCCD-Rome, Dec. 23.



No new funds on the horizon

Gender Perspectives for Earth Summit 2002

As one of the nine Major Groups identified at the first Earth Summit, Women will play a central role in forwarding Sustainable Development in 2002. At a recent gathering in Berlin, women from around the world joined together determine a common agenda for 2002.

55 participants from 12 countries attended an international expert conference on "Gender Perspectives for Earth Summit 2002", held in Berlin, Germany, 10-12 January 2001. The conference brought together a wealth of knowledge and expertise from various backgrounds – NGOs and women's organisations, grassroots activists, academics and policy-makers. The German Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety jointly hosted the conference with the Heinrich Boell Foundation.

As part of the preparatory process towards Earth Summit 2002 the goal of the conference was to identify the linkages between gender and environment issues. It is hoped that this process would help to develop concrete policy recommendations on gender perspectives from developing and developed countries on issues to be discussed at the 9th Session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD 9) in April 2001 – energy, transport, information for decision making and participation. The workshop outcomes will be fed into the CSD-9 process aiming to ensure gender mainstreaming on these issues. Discussions also focussed on women's priorities and possible preparatory strategies for Earth Summit 2002.

The need for equitable involvement of women in implementing Agenda 21, the Rio Conventions and CSD decisions has been reaffirmed over and over again. By looking at gender as one of the social categories impacting significantly on people's knowledge, values, emotions and behaviour, the conference contributed to clarifying the value-added of gender mainstreaming in sustainable development decision-making. Women involved in policy-making processes expressed the need to contribute their expertise and to deliver recommendations within the existing framework of policy-making, as well as the need to fundamentally question the current paradigm. Delegates acknowledged that a dual approach is needed in order to achieve a more holistic approach to policy making. On the one hand by arguing for a different framework, whilst also working for change within the present framework. The dominating current paradigm - 'economism' - is seen to have significantly contributed to bringing about the environmental, social and economic crises all over the world.



Global responses to global issues

In each session key issues concerning knowledge and research gaps were identified, and commonalities and differences between developing and developed countries were discussed. Discussions were prepared through background papers covering the perspectives from developing and developed countries, respectively (see www.earthsummit2002.org/workshop).

In the session on energy, key recommendations for CSD-9 included:

- Developing guidelines from a gender perspective for investment policies in the energy sector;
- Ensuring that all energy-related research includes a gender and sustainable development analysis made by gender-balanced teams;
- Developing advocacy tools to link poverty, energy and gender;
- Requesting necessary resources for national and regional processes to implement decisions.

One of the main outcomes of the session on transport was the need to improve our definition and understanding of mobility

in order to better reflect women's lives. Mobility for women characteristically consists of diverse patterns of a multitude of tasks and related trips. In this definition the "caring economy" needs to be taken into account. An alternative vision to the current system including a gender perspective should be created. A prominent point is the question of priorities – gender justice or sustainable development? Providing the same access and mobility to everybody based on current practices in the North, is not a sustainable solution. Changes

are need not only to provide more access to women and people in developing countries, but for consumers in the North to change their behaviour.

The discussion on indicators and information for decision-making identified priority areas which need further work in relation to gender considerations. A considerable digital divide in the world has to be taken into consideration: 90% of the world's population do not have access to the internet, especially in developing countries where women are particularly under-represented. Women and women's organisations must participate in the development of social-environmental information systems. Equal access for women to information technology and its application in interactive decision-making for sustainable development need to be ensured. Key issues, such as women's health, gender division of labour, the participation of women in decision-making bodies and budget allocation to gender related issues need to be integrated into sustainability indicator systems.

Agenda 21 will not be renegotiated at the Earth Summit 2002, but new issues are being tabled and women need to be proactive in prioritising the debate. Women's strategies towards Earth Summit 2002 could be facilitated by a small coordinating team of experienced organisations, including the CSD NGO Women's Caucus, with a broader forum of interested groups operating around the coordinating team to facilitate effective communication and co-ordinated efforts. Task Forces on certain issues should be formed. Preliminary suggestions include

the formation of an advocacy, host country, media and parallel event task force. The idea of developing an updated Women's Action Agenda for a Healthy Planet as a comprehensive statement for 2002 found widespread support among the participants, and is being lead by REDEH Brazil/WEDO, with a small coordinating team from other organisations.

The conference produced a co-chairs summary which will be available by 25th January. The full report will be published in February 2001.

Contact: www.earthsummit2002.org/workshop

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Meet the International Advisory Board

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPEMENT INTERNATIONAL

IAB MEMBER Sandra Clout/Peter Ritchie

WEB www.sustdev.org

ORGANISATION Part of ICG Publishing Ltd, Sustainable Development International and it's sister publication Sustainable Travel and Tourism are information resources both online and in-print. They aim to address agenda21 implementation in all industry sectors. Daily sustainable news is available on www.sustdev.org and www.sustravel.com brings syndicated sustainable travel news.

KEY PARTNERS/LINKS Sustainable Development International and Sustainable Travel and Tourism work closely with all shareholders in sustainable development, e.g, Industry, civil society academics, trade unions, local authorities and associations such as UNED, Green Globe21, Future Forests, ES2002.

DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES

IAB MEMBER: Dr. Ashok Khosla

WEB: www.devalt.org, www.peoplefirstindia.org

ORGANISATION: Development Alternatives work to create sustainable livelihoods. They utilise front line technologies to create these livelihoods. The Development Alternatives Group is among the premier NGOs in India working in the fields of environment, appropriate technologies, institutional governance systems, rural development and E-commerce.

KEY PARTNERS/LINKS: Member of Earth Council, IUCN,

ANPED in Action

ANPED - The Northern Alliance for Sustainability, has recently launched a new initiative titled 'Overcoming the barriers to effective local action on sustainable development'.

The project is grounded on the hypothesis that many local projects are failing to deliver their full potential, not because of failings of their own, but because of a range of political and institutional obstacles. The aim of the process is to identify and highlight barriers to local action on sustainability.

Domestic reports will be prepared by NGO networks in a range of countries. So far Networks from Romania, the Netherlands, Russia, Slovakia, the Ukraine and the UK have signed up. These national reports will be combined later to one main document which in turn will be submitted to the 10th session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development in May - the first Preparatory Committee meeting to the Earth Summit. The domestic reports will also be useful stand-alone resources at the national level to inform the preparatory process for the Earth Summit.

In identifying barriers, the project is likely to focus on the following key areas:

- Relationships between communities and local authorities;
- Legal and institutional limits;
- Difficulties facing cross-disciplinary work;
- Lack of support from national organisations;
- Lack of support for innovation;
- The Role of market economies;
- The tension between representative and participative ways of working.

ANPED's initiative will also have wider objectives than solely to inform the Earth Summit 2002 process. These include:

- An increased focus on the relevance of communities to government and governance;
- To address the increasing focus on globalisation and a desire to do more than merely protest;
- To draw from the wide range of experience that is emerging from work on 'Local Agenda 21';
- To increasingly engage the public in implementing 'Local Agenda 21'.

The central stocktaking process in 2002 will be a review of the implementation of Agenda 21- particularly that of local action. Learning from the experiences of the last 8 years will be vital in moving the agenda for sustainable development forward for the next 10.

Contact: anped@anped.org

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

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Diary Dates, Events & Conferences

5-9th February	21st Session of the UNEP Governing Council. Nairobi, Kenya. Email: millerb@unep.org
13-23rd February	39th Session of the UN Commission for Social Development. New York, USA. Contact: www.un.org/esa/socdev/csd/2001.htm
12-16 February	UN Forum on Forests - Organisational Session. New York, USA. Contact e-mail: vahanen@un.org
12-16 February	18th Session of the Commission on Human Settlements. Nairobi, Kenya. Contact: www.unchcs.org/chs171.html
19-23 February	The 2nd Session of the PrepCom for Istanbul+5. Nairobi, Kenya. Contact: www.istanbul5.org/
20-22 March	UNEP Ministerial Meeting on Environment, Sustainable Development & Trade. Berlin, Germany. Contact: www.unep.ch/etu/etp/events/upcming/berlin.htm
13-23 February	UN High level Intergovernmental Consultation on Financing for Development - Prep. Com. 2. New York, USA. Contact: pietracci@un.org
28 February - 2 March	UN 2nd Ad Hoc Open Ended Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Energy & Sustainable Development. New York, USA. Contact: www.un.org/esa/sustdev/enr.htm
5-16 March	Intersessional to the 9th Session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development. New York, USA. Contact: www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd9/csd9_2001.htm
5-16 March	45th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women. New York, USA. Contact: www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/45sess.htm
26-30 March	34th Session of the UN Commission on Population & Development. New York, USA. Contact: www.undp.org/popin/unpopcom.htm
16-27 April	9th Session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development. New York, USA. Contact: www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd9/csd9_2001.htm

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

- UNEP Governing Council Session - Outcomes & Analysis
- Istanbul + 5 second Prep. Com. - Outcomes & Analysis
- UN Commission on Social Development - Outcomes & Analysis
- UN High Level Intergovernmental Consultations on Financing for Development - Outcomes & Analysis
- UN Commission on Sustainable Development Intersessional - Preview
- UN Commission on the Status of Women - Preview

Your Input is our Output.

Network 2002 is produced by the United Nations Environment & Development Forum, a multistakeholder NGO working in preparation for Earth Summit 2002. We welcome your contribution to the process.

Contact the editor at: tmiddleton@earthsummit2002.org.
Network 2002 is also available online at: www.earthsummit2002.org

